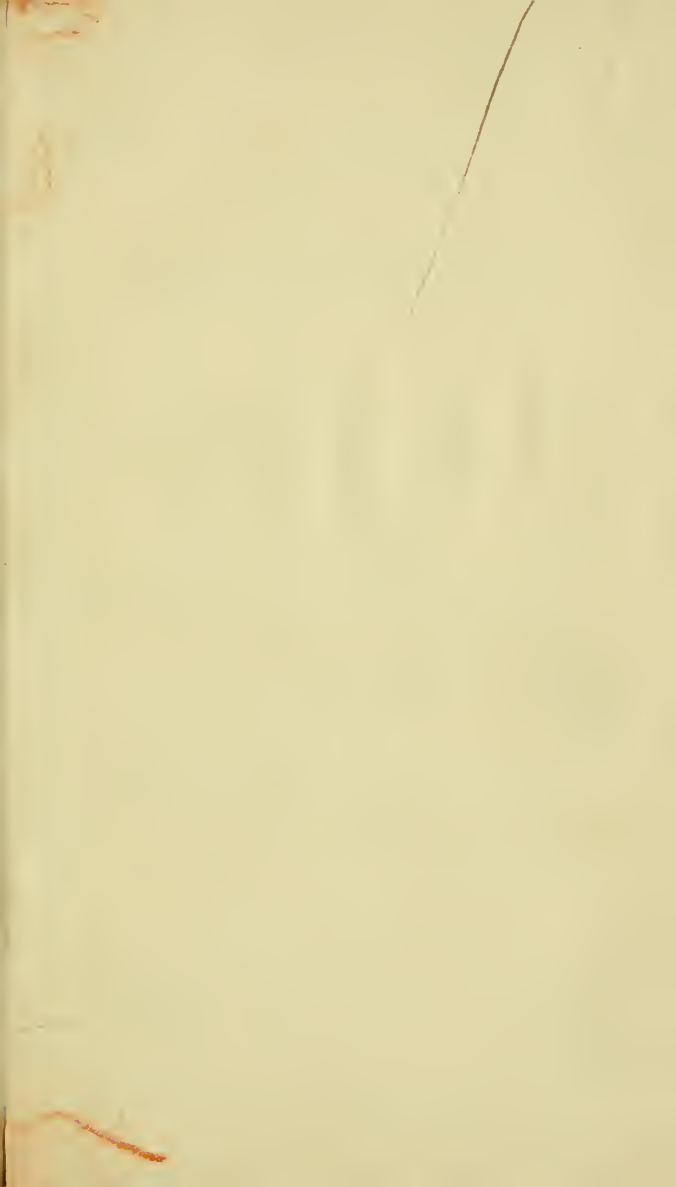


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Love in its Variety:
Being a
COLLECTION
OF
Select Novels;

Written in *Spanish* by
Signior MICHAEL BANDELLO.

Made *English*
By Mrs. ELIZA HATWOOD.

L O N D O N

201745
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T H E
 Distress'd Beauty ;
 O R,
Love at a Venture.



Certain Grandee of *Spain*, called *Don Basilio*, was married very young to a Lady of great Beauty and Fortune ; but her Death leaving him a Widower before those vigorous Years, which animate Mankind with amorous Inclinations, were over with him ; he soon made a second Choice. *Donna Mariana* had in her Temper, all that

B Haugh-

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less have thrown her into Passions as fatal to his Repose, as her Expences would have been to his Fortune. He therefore sought to bring her to a better Disposition by unperceiv'd Degrees. He made Invitations to all the neighbouring Gentry ; had frequent Balls at his House, and encourag'd all kinds of Diversion, not Gaming excepted : but then he took care to make no Acquaintance who play'd not with Moderation ; and who by being cautious of losing much themselves, put it not into her power to do it. By this prudent Management, he won her to live in a manner agreeable to him, without letting her know he attempted any Alteration in her Behaviour.

It was in one of those fine Evenings, which in *Spain* made so delightful a Reparation for those Pleasures the violent Heats of the Day denies, that *Don Basilio*, leaving his Wife with two Ladies engaged at *Ombre*, went out to take a Walk in a large Park he had behind his House : The Sweetness of the Air, the pleasant Harmony of a thousand Sorts of Birds, and the charming Solitude of every thing about him, made him unwilling to exchange it for the Company he had left within. He pass'd on, indulging Contemplation on the various Beauties of Nature, till he came to
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the farther side of the Park, which was inclos'd by a Wall, in which was a Gate that opened into a Wood, where he was accustomed to hunt the Buck. Enlarging Reflection with different Ideas, he went into it ; but had not proceeded many Paces, before he heard the Accents of a Female Voice, singing in the most melodious and enchanting manner. The Fable of the *Syrens*, and the more modern Tales of Fairies, came immediately into his head ; and if he had been inclin'd to believe that supernatural Beings ever made themselves intelligible to mortal Sense, he would have believed the Sounds he heard, proceeded from no human Creature. While he was considering, the Harmony was interrupted by the Cries of an Infant ; but soon again renewed with greater force, as if to drown those other less pleasing Notes. As he approached more near, and heard distinctly the Words, he perceiv'd they were extremely melancholy, and the Cadence frequently broke off by Sighs : at last, directed by the Voice, he came to the thickest and most remote Part of the Wood, and by the Light of the Moon discover'd a Woman sitting on some little Shrubs that grew there, with a young Child sucking at her Breast.—The Surprize of such a Sight, in so desert a Place, prevented him from speaking pre-

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sently ; and she, no less affrighted to behold a Man so near her, rose from the Posture she was in, and throwing herself at his Feet, conjur'd him not to hurt her. These Words making him recollect himself, I have no such Design, *said he* ; all that I desire of you, is to acquaint me by what strange Adventure you and that poor Infant are expos'd to the Dangers of so wild a Solitude ? Alas ! *answer'd she*, the Story would be too tedious for your Patience.—It shall suffice to tell you, that I am here, only because the cruel World vouchsafes no better Shelter, either for my self, or this unhappy Innocent. Yet, *continued she, bursting into a Flood of Tears*, I am not driven out in this abandon'd manner, a Companion, and perhaps, a Prey to the wild Beasts which haunt these Deserts, for any other Crime than Poverty. —All this Day have I in vain implor'd, at great Mens Doors, a Bit of Bread, or the Privilege of a Barn or Stable to take that Rest which weary'd Nature asks, and by all deny'd, took Refuge in this Wood. The friendly Grass refuses not my Pressure, nor these spreading Trees their Shelter. Tho' the Words she spoke, were utter'd with an Accent of the deepest Melancholy, and sometimes scarce intelligible, for Sighs which forcibly broke in upon her

her Voice, and made frequent Parentheses in her Complaint; yet was the Heart of *Don Basilio* so much affected with it, that he could not restrain his Tears: nor was it with unavailing Pity alone, that he regarded her: He resolv'd to redress the Miseries she labour'd under, and having taken a Moment or two to consider by what means, he should most effectually, as well as most conveniently, do so; he bid her follow him, and he would provide her with a better Lodging! She obey'd, invoking Heaven every Step she went, to reward with endless Blessings, the Compassion he took on her.

He conducted her into the Park, near the Gate of which was a little House, where his Gardener dwelt; whom calling down, he order'd to take in that Woman and her Child, to let her have a Lodging, and that his Wife should provide her with every thing needful for her Refreshment. The Fellow with all Humility assured him his Commands should be obey'd: And the poor Wanderer, by what had pass'd between them, understanding the Quality of her Benefactor, was ready in joyful Gratitude to fall on her Knees to thank him for the Condescension, as before, when terrify'd at his first Approach, she had done to entreat. she might receive no In-

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jury from him. But perceiving her Intent, he prevented it, by telling her, he desir'd not to be thank'd in that manner; but that he would see her the next Day : And if the Account she was able to give of her self was such as might deserve Compassion, she should not fail to find larger Effects of it. He spoke no more to her at that time, nor waited for her Reply; but turning the other way, left her to go into the House with the Gardener, and came back to the Company, who by this time began to wonder what had so long depriv'd them of him. To which he answer'd, That having been delighted with the Pleasures of the Evening, he could not forbear passing some part of it in the open Air, while they were amusing themselves in a Diversion less agreeable to his Taste : But related not a Word of the Adventure which had fallen in his way, knowing the Disposition of his Wife not to be altogether so much inclin'd to Acts of Compassion as his; or when she was so, it was only Objects of her own chusing, who were to feel the Effects of it.

So much, however, did this Adventure run in his head, that Sleep for the best Part of the Night was a Stranger to his Eyes.—That harmonious Voice, and the Judgment with which each Note of it was
rais'd,

rais'd, convinc'd him that she must not only have known a better State, but also that she had receiv'd her Education among those of the politeſt World. The little Diſcourſe ſhe had with him, ſeem'd to him very different from her Appearance; and the manner in which ſhe receiv'd the Favours he conferr'd, not like one who had been accuſtomed to be obliged in ſuch a way. He was impatient till he had a farther Knowledge of her Misfortunes; and as ſoon as he was dreſt, repair'd to the Gardener's where he had left her. He found her ſitting with her Child in her Arms, whom ſhe was endeavouring to lull aſleep that way, for want of a Cradle. She roſe at his Approach, and ſurpriz'd him with the Sight of a Face, which, tho' viſibly impair'd by Grief, had ſomething in it ſo irrefiſtibly engaging, that he could not behold her without feeling an Emotion, ſuch as the ſudden Appearance of a Perſon, that is very dear to one; excites. When I ſay, very dear, I would not have the Reader imagine, that I mean he was agitated for her, with any of thoſe wanton Heats which are call'd Love: No, it was with a kind of paternal Tenderneſs he regarded her; a Warmth of Heart exceeding Pity, but more temperate than that of that Paſſion which ariſes from the Difference of

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Sex. The Air with which she receiv'd him, and that Grace which accompanied all her Words, confirm'd his former Conjecture, that she had been born to a Condition vastly different from that which rendered his Protection of so great a service to her. He sat down, and oblig'd her, unwilling as she was, to do so too: After which, he began to question her, concerning the Place of her Birth; who her Parents were, and by what means she had been reduc'd to the Extremities he found her in. To which she reply'd, that she was of that her Father was a Servant to the Signior *Garcini*, whose only Daughter taking a Fancy to her in her Childhood, she was bred up with her, and by that means had the Advantage of a better Education than the Meanness of her Parents could otherwise have afforded: That the Steward of the Family becoming enamour'd of her, not only her Father, but the old Lord also interested himself so far in this Affair, which they thought so greatly to her Advantage; that on her declaring an Aversion to the Match, she was confin'd a Prisoner in her Chamber, till she should be brought to understand the Good that was design'd her. But, alas! my Lord! continued she, I had already disposed of my self: I was privately married at that time to a young Man, who
came

came but by chance into that Part of the Country ; and had left it with an Intention, (as he told me) to return.—But never ! Oh never have I seen him since !—I found myself with Child, and to have confess'd it, I knew would have been far from softening the Indignity which all my Friends had already conceiv'd against me : I therefore rather chose to fly them, and the cruel *Eldomar* (for so my Ruiner was call'd) having told me he had Relations of good Account at *Andaluzia*, I resolv'd to have recourse to them, and one Night escaped the Vigilance of those set to observe my Actions : and travelling on foot all that Night, early in the Morning arriv'd at *Alcala* ; where I got a Mule which brought me to *Torville*, and so by easy Journeys, I at last arriv'd at *Andaluzia*. But, Oh God ! how terrible was my Surprize, and Grief ; when, after the most diligent Enquiry, I could find no Person who had ever even heard the Name of *Eldomar* ! Never was there a greater Proof that every human Being is under the Protection of a Guardian Angel ; since nothing less than the Interposition of some supernatural Power could have prevented me from the Guilt of laying violent hands on my own Life.—A while I rag'd, was mad and desperate ; but the Christian at last prevail'd above the

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the Wretch; and I had the Fortitude to resolve, rather to endure the worst that could befall me in this World, than forfeit by so rash a Deed my Pretences to a better. I got a Lodging in a little mean House at *Torville*, and with the Money I had about me, made a shift to support myself till I was deliver'd of my Burden; but my Landlady dying, I was turn'd out of doors by her Son and Daughter; having no longer any thing to pay for the Trouble I was to them. In this Condition, unknown and friendless, did I wander the whole Day, entreating Succour for this unhappy Babe; but not one, no, not one pitying Ear was open to my Complaint, or the tender Cries of this dear Innocent, whose Wants made me not feel my own, till Heaven in Mercy directed my weary Feet to take Shelter and Repose in that Wood; and sent, when least I hoped it, a generous Benefactor in your Lordship. This, my Lord! *pursued she*, is the unhappy Story of my past Life; what Miseries are yet to ensue, Heaven only knows.

Don *Basilio*, who had listned to her without interruption, perceiving she had done; ask'd her, if she had no Hope of being received by her Father and that good Lord, to whom she had been so much oblig'd, in case she should be enabled to return to them.

them. To which she answer'd in the Negative: It would only, *added she*, be an Aggravation of the Misfortunes I now labour under to attempt a Reconciliation. He then demanded by what means she expected to maintain, even from perishing for Want, herself and Child: and if there was any Employment, that she was fit for, or could undertake, which might defend her from the Wretchedness which threatened her; or encourage the Charity she wish'd to find. As there is nothing, my Lord, *reply'd she*, (with a modest Assurance,) so mean that I would not gladly submit to; so also, there are very few of those Offices in which my Sex are instructed, that I am not capable of, (if intrusted with them)——But who, alas! *continued she*, (weeping a second time,) will repose Confidence in a Stranger, and one whose Appearance is so abject and forlorn? Don *Basilio*, who had talked to her in this manner, more to try in what manner she would answer, than that he had any Design the Charity he had begun to treat her with, should cease till she was better provided for; now gave over his Interrogatories, and told her she should remain in the House where she was, and know no Want of any thing. I know not, *said he*, in what manner I shall employ you; but will think of

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of some Business to make you useful to my Family : in the mean time, be as easy as your Circumstances will permit, and depend, while you do nothing, to alter the good Opinion I have conceiv'd of you, I will always be your Friend. In speaking these Words, he put some Gold into her Hand ; adding, you may have Necessity for many things besides Food and Lodging : and went immediately out of the Room, to avoid hearing the humble Retributions she was about to make him.

As he went from her, he gave a second Command to the Gardener and his Wife, that they should treat their poor Guest with all imaginable Tendernefs: and to prevent the other Servants of the Family, from making any Enquiry by what means she came there, order'd she should pass for a Relation of theirs, whom he had permitted to be with him.

Don *Basilio* was too much lov'd as well as fear'd, by those over whom he had power ; not to have all his Commands obey'd without Reluctance or Reserve. This concerning our fair Wanderer, was so punctually observ'd, that among that numerous Family of which he was Master, there was not one, but believ'd her to be what she was represented to them for ; the Sister's Daughter of the Gardiner, who
having

having been forsaken by her Husband, and reduc'd to great Misfortunes ; the Goodness of *Basilio* had permitted to remain with them.

Every one was too well acquainted, with the Charitable Disposition of this great Man, and the Kindness he had for any who had liv'd with him a great while, and behav'd well, to wonder at this Act of Indulgence to the Gardener ; and *Letitia*, (for so his suppos'd Niece call'd herself) was so obliging among the Servants, that they could not but be very friendly to her ; and in a short time, she became extreamly valuable for a thousand good Offices she did them : such as reconciling by her Wit and Persuasion, any little Differences which happen'd among them ; helping, according to her Strength, any one of them, whom she saw hurried with too great a Share of Business ; diverting them at spare Hours, with some delightful Story ; assisting them in the contriving their Clothes ; and writing Letters for them to their absent Friends.

Don *Basilio*, saw her almost every day, either sitting at her Window, or passing up and down the Garden ; and observ'd with an inward Satisfaction, the Change which his Charities had wrought in her. Those Eyes, whose Lustre had been dimm'd
by

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by Tears, and sunk with frequent Watching, began now to shine with an uncommon Lustre: That Complexion, so lately of a pale, and almost deadly Colour, had now a blooming Tincture mingled with the White, which scarcely could be equall'd by any thing in Nature. He rejoiced within himself, that he had contributed to so happy an Alteration: The Pleasure he took in it; rewarded the Action. But he forbore letting her know how much he was affected with it; or indeed, speaking to her at all, lest he should be observ'd by any of the Family; some one or other of them, being scarce ever from her.

But it was not long that he endur'd this Restraint: an Accident happened to introduce her into those Apartments of the House, where he had all the Opportunity imaginable of talking to her, without seeming to be desirous of it.

The Anniversary of *Donna Mariana's* Birth-Day being near at hand, that Lady had bought a Piece of Silver Stuff, embroider'd in the most beautiful manner, with several kind of Birds and Fruits, in order to be made up against the Ball; which in Compliment to the Day, *Don Basilio* gave to all the neighbouring Nobility and Gentry: but finding the Pattern too scanty for her Purpose, the Servants were dis-

dispatch'd in search of some Embroiderer whose Work might match it. The Silk was carried to several, but there was no Person in that Country who would undertake it. Donna *Mariana* was uneasy beyond measure at the Disappointment, and complain'd to her Husband, that he had brought her to a Place where she could have nothing done to her Mind. One of her Women happening to mention this in the hearing of *Letitia*; she desir'd to see the Work, telling her, that she had learn'd to embroider, and doubted not, but to imitate any thing of that kind so exactly, that it should not be known from the Original. Tho' the Person to whom she spoke, could scarce believe it in her power to make good her Words; yet having a very great Opinion of her Ingenuity, she went directly to her Lady, and inform'd her of what she said, giving at the same time the History of her Life, as it was believ'd in the Family.

Donna *Mariana* consented she should be brought into the Room where she was; but as soon as she saw her, giving herself the trouble of examining no farther than her appearance, she cry'd out to her to be gone; for there was little probability such a Creature as she should have the Skill or Fancy to accomplish such a Work. To
which

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which the other, with modest Mildness, answer'd, That if her Ladyship would permit her to make Tryal, she would endeavour to please her. The haughty Fierceness of the Lady being a little abated by this meek Behaviour, she vouchsafed to suffer her to give a Proof how far she understood that sort of Work, by drawing a Flower on a Piece of white Sattin, which she order'd should be given her for that purpose ; and embroidering it after in Silk and Gold, which she did in her presence with so much Art and Dexterity, that she no longer doubted if she was capable of doing what she had undertook. The Materials were immediately got ready, the Women employ'd in threading Needles, untwisting the Silk, settling the Frame, and waiting on this new Work-woman for the better dispatch of the Affair. And because Donna *Mariana* would needs have it done in her Anti-chamber, and was too nice to endure the sight of any thing so meanly habited in her presence, she gave her a Cast-off Robe, which had been her own, in which *Letitia* dress'd herself with so great an Exactness and good Air, that all who saw her were amaz'd at the Transformation ; and also, that a Person who had not been accustomed to wear such Clothes, should know how to put them on with so good a grace.

Donna

Donna *Mariana* herself, in spite of her natural Fierceness, was extremely taken with her, and confess'd that she now thought she appear'd deserving enough to be receiv'd among the Number of those who attended her. Don *Basilio* saw her too, and with a Pleasure which is not to be described ; but he conceal'd it carefully from his Lady, and when she told him in what manner she had taken her, he not so much as commended her Charity ; knowing very well, that if she did a good Action, she was willing to have it all her own ; and would soon have lessened her Bounties to her, had he appear'd to have been pleas'd with them : He spoke not to her as he pass'd through the Room, nor when at any time he sat there, discoursing with Donna *Mariana* ; and looking over the Work, he found Ways to praise that, without seeming to impute any Merit to the Person who wrought it. She was not however ignorant of the good Intentions he had still towards her ; for tho' he talk'd not to her, seldom a Day pass'd in which he did not (unperceiv'd by any of the Standers-by) slip into her Hand some little Present, to keep awake her Gratitude to him.

When this Piece of Work was finish'd, Donna *Mariana* found others to employ her in ; and a Maid having being order'd

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on purpose to attend her Child, she was scarce ever from her Apartment. That Lady being now frequently abroad, either walking, or on her Visits; she was very much alone at her Work : Don *Basilio* observ'd it with pleasure ; and that Pity which had at first induced him in her favour, being now converted into a more warm Passion, he took an opportunity, when he knew his Wife was engaged elsewhere, to let her know the Sentiments her Beauty had inspir'd him with. But never did any languishing Maid receive the unhop'd Addresses of the Man she lov'd with greater Transport, than did the modest and truly virtuous *Letitia* with Horror, the Proposals made to her by her Master. Oh Heavens ! cry'd she, is there no Friendship — No Compassion to be found from your Sex, without a self-interested View ? — I consider'd you, my Lord ! as my Guardian Angel in the Shape of Man : — My Redeemer, my Deliverer from a thousand Evils : — The Giver of a thousand Blessings. — My Heart swells with the tenderest Gratitude ; and Life itself would be too mean an Acknowledgment of what I owe you. — Oh seek not then to sully the Lustre of such glorious Actions ! — Taunt not all you have done by foul Dishonour ! — Aim not to make me
more

more wretched, than, without being wicked, is in the power of Fate itself!—Rather turn me out;—Let me be again expos'd to all the Miseries of Want and Beggary; rich in my Innocence, I can look down on all the meaner Woes that Fortune threatens; but if I once lose that, I am poor indeed. These virtuous Repulses were so far from abating the Ardor of Don *Basilio's* Affections, that, on the contrary, he grew more enam'd.—That humble Gratitude his Bounties had inspired her with, warring with the Indignation which his late Offers rais'd within her Soul, made her Eyes sparkle with more radiant Fires: a noble Majesty diffus'd itself through all her Air; and in spite of the Power he had over her, made him fearful to offend. He endeavour'd to overcome her Objections, only by persuasive Arguments; but in this he found all his Eloquence defective: she was fortified by stronger and more potent Reasons than any he could bring, and wanted not a Manner of expressing them, which discover'd that great Reading, and a Depth of Judgment is not confin'd to the Male Sex alone. The more she talk'd, the more he was amaz'd and charm'd: Love grew almost to Adoration, and tho' he could not give over his Sollicitations, he pursued them in such a manner, as could
leave

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leave her no room to apprehend he would make use of his Power, either to gratify his Desires, or revenge her refusing to comply with them.

She receiv'd all this time greater Civilities from *Donna Mariana*, than she at her first being introduced to her could have hoped: And 'tis certain, that had it not been for her excessive Pride, which would suffer her to look on all who had any Dependance on her, no otherwise than as Creatures of a different Specie from her self; *Letitia* might justly have thought herself happy in her Service: As it was, she was extreamly well contented with her Lot, and made the Humour of her Lady so very much her Study, that by her Diligence to please, she very often disappointed her of the Power of finding fault; and when she would do it, bore it with so much Patience, that not all the Ill-Nature of the other could enable her to hold out with it. The most difficult Task which this fair Wanderer had, was to behave to *Don Basilio* in such a manner, as should neither make her appear ungrateful for the Benefits she had receiv'd from him; nor give him any room to hope she would pay a greater Price for them, than was consistent with Virtue. To avoid, therefore, hearing any Discourses so unpleasing to her,

her, as those with which he entertained her, she kept as much as possible out of his Sight ; and whenever the Absence of her Lady gave him an opportunity of speaking to her, she feign'd some Business or other to go abroad, by which means she lost many Presents which his Passion would have made her, in hope to work her to his Will : but as it was not in the power of all he could do, so she desir'd not to deceive him by a false Belief.

In this Position were the Affairs of the Family, when Donna *Mariana* was seiz'd with a violent Fever ; *Letitia*, as well to testify her Gratitude for the Favours she had receiv'd from her, as to keep herself out of the way of Don *Basilio's* Importunities, never stirr'd from her Bed-side.— Never was a more diligent Nurse ; nor were the Cares she express'd for her Recovery merely supercilious : whenever there was any Hope given of it by the Physicians, her Heart exulted with a real Joy ; and when by any dubious Words they seem'd to fear the contrary, it sunk with an unfeigned Grief. Not that these Assiduities proceeded from an extraordinary Tenderness, the Disposition of that Lady denied her being so regarded even by her nearest Relations : but our distress'd Fair-one looking on her Life, as the only Bulwark she

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she had against the Attacks of her enamoured Master, trembled what should become of her when she should be depriv'd of it : But not all her Prayers, nor the Care and Skill of those about her, had the power to quell the Ragings of that furious Disease, which first took from her the Use of her Reason, and soon after seiz'd on the vital Spirits ; leaving only a cold Lump of senseless Clay, instead of that once haughty, gay and lovely Form which had so lately thought itself the Admiration of the World.

As disobliging as in some respects her Life had been to *Don Basilio*; he omitted not, at her Death, paying all those Ceremonies of Grief, which could be expected from the most tender Husband : He celebrated her Funeral with the utmost Magnificence : He shut himself into his Chamber, and saw no Company for a whole Month ; nor suffer'd any thing to appear about his House, but in the Sable Livery of Sorrow : nor was this Solemnity of Mourning, altogether hypocritical. He had loved *Mariana* with an Infinity of Tenderness ; and tho' her Pride, Ill-Humour, and many Irregularities in her Conduct, join'd with his late Passion for *Letitia*, had very much abated it ; yet had he still Remains of it, sufficient to make him extremely
con-

concern'd at her Death. He spoke not to *Leitia* any thing concerning his Passion for a great while; tho' he order'd that she and her Child should be put into handsome Mourning, and continued in the Family in the same manner as before his Lady died.

This truly virtuous Woman, however, avoided as much as possible all Opportunities of being seen by him: nor did she, like most of her Sex, who take pleasure in being admir'd, tho' they never design to reward the Affiduities they are desirous of being treated with; endeavour to add any thing to her native Charms. On the contrary, she eclips'd them as much as she could do with Decency: her Eyes had no affected Languishments; her Mouth no studied Graces: She rather veil'd the Lustre of the one in downcast Looks; and suffer'd not the dimpling Beauties of the other to break out in Smiles. Never was the vainest of Womankind more industrious to make a Conquest, than she was to lose that which against her Will she had gain'd, over the Heart of the discerning *Don Basilio*.

But Love, like Death, pursues those most to whom its Approaches are least welcome. The first Emotions of Grief, for the Death of *Mariana* being over; that warmer Pas-

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sion,

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sion, which, tho' smother'd for a time in the Breast of *Don Basilio*, began now again to exert itself with greater Force than ever; and having no longer any Interruptions to fear, he sent his Page to the Room where *Letitia* was, to order her to come into his Chamber. It was with a Mixture of Grief and Terror that she receiv'd this Command, too truly guessing what the Conversation was, with which she was to be entertain'd: yet Obedience was unavoidable; she consider'd she was equally in his power, in any other Part of his House, as that to which she was summon'd to repair; and therefore thought it better not to irritate him by any Demonstrations of Distrust; besides, she had hitherto observ'd nothing, which could make her think his Desires, however violent, would prompt him to do a base Action: and for the rest, relyed on her own Virtue, and the Assistance of Heaven for Protection. She could not, tho' supported by the best Guards a Woman can have, forbear trembling as she pass'd through the Gallery which led to his Apartment; and her Fears redoubled, when having gone through the Antichambers, she perceiv'd it was in an inner Room, and out of hearing from the rest of the House, that he intended to receive her. A thousand Stops did she make in that short Journey;

un-

uncertain if she should proceed or turn back: but the Remembrance how infinitely she had been oblig'd to his Bounty, and how justly he might be offended with this Diffidence, in Case she suspected him without reason, made her resolve to put it to the Tryal. She found him lying on a Couch; and standing at a distance, entreated to know his Commands. Come nearer Pretty one, *said he*; what I have to communicate is of such a nature, as takes off all these unnecessary Regards. These Words, and the Air with which they were spoke, convinc'd her that it was indeed no other Business, than that unpleasing one of his Passion, which she was to hear: but dissembling her Thoughts as much as possible, she reply'd in this manner; My Lord! I must not only forget your Quality, but also those unnumber'd Obligations, I have to your Goodness, to forfeit that Respect which is due from me to both. Respect, *resum'd he*, can never be so much prov'd as by Obedience; and since you evade Entreaties, I command you to sit by me, and listen to what I have to say. There is nothing my Lord, *answer'd she again*, which I would not readily undertake, to prove either my Gratitude, or Zeal for your Service: but I beseech you render me not incapable of hearing or replying as I ought, by giving
C 2 me

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me a Confusion which I have not Strength enough of Mind to overcome. Well then, cry'd he, you must be forced to remember, that where a Love is, such as that I have declared for you, there can be no Difference in Degrees ; or if there be, 'tis on the Charmer's side.——I am more your Slave, my sweet *Letitia*, than you can imagine yourself mine ; and if you confess any Obligations to me, vastly is it in your power to weigh down the Ballance, and make me Debtor beyond all that my whole Life and Fortune can repay. In speaking this, he drew her gently toward the Couch, where compelling her to sit down by him, he pursued the Discourse he had begun in these Terms : The Desires with which I am possess'd for you, my dear *Letitia* ! are not, *said he*, of that nature with which Men are ordinarily inspir'd : I love you not to ruin, but to make you happy ; yours and your Child's Fortune shall be my Care : I will immediately settle on you what shall defend you from all future Injuncts ; and as a Proof that I intend you shall no more labour under the Disquiets of a State of Dependance, accept these Presents to adorn that Beauty, which without any Assistance from aught but Nature, has made me, from your Master, become your Slave. With these Words he gave into her hand

hand a fine Diamond Necklace which had been Donna *Mariana's*, and several other very rich Jewells. But *Letitia*, who had not hitherto endeavour'd to offer any thing in interruption to what he said, no sooner saw the Jewels in her hand, than she flung them on a Table which stood near her, and at the same time throwing herself on her Knees, Oh seek not, my Lord ! *cry'd she*, to attempt a Virtue which I hope will be impregnable; nor think those glittering Baits of any force to gain what all that Love and Esteem your generous Charity has ingrafted in my Soul, cannot prevail on me to grant.——Believe, that what you have already done, has made me so much yours, that all you can hereafter do, has not the power to add one Grain to that unbounded Store of Reverence and Tenderness, my Breast is full of for you.—All that Love and Duty which a Daughter can pay to the most indulgent Parent, a Servant to the best of Masters, a Subject to his Prince, is short of what I feel for you.——You have been more than Father, than Master, or than King to me; and, next my God, shall ever be regarded by me.——All that I am with Honesty, is wholly devoted to you; for you, shall these hands be ever lifted up in fervent Prayer :
——For your long Life, this Heart shall

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never cease to pour forth Wishes, nor this Mouth forget to praise the Goodness of my Benefactor.——That little Innocent, with its Mother equally preserv'd, equally oblig'd, shall learn to lisp out its first words in Blessings on you.——All the Services of our poor Lives, shall be the generous Don *Basilio's* ;——that great, that noble Example of Charity and Compassion.

It was with an equal Share of Admiration and Disquiet, that Don *Basilio* saw the Contempt with which she treated his Offers, and at the same time testify'd so perfect a Gratitude for those meaner Favours she had receiv'd from him. A Mind so truly great in a Person of that mean Extraction, seem'd prodigious to him ; he had thought the Death of his Wife, easing her of all those Fears she might have of her Jealousy, wou'd have left her an easy Conquest to his Wishes. But to see her thus resolutely hold out against Temptations so powerful as he had made use of, while it amaz'd and charm'd him, fill'd him also with Despair : With a deep Sigh he rais'd her from the Posture she had been in, and obliging her once more to sit ; How artful are you, unkind *Leticia*, said he, in palliating the bitterness of your refusing my Desires? you give me nothing, yet pretend you bestow all. Think
you

you my Love so cold, or that Age has so far depriv'd me of the Joys which Beauty yields, that I can be content with such Returns as you have named? No, you must be ignorant of your own Charms, to believe they are not capable of restoring Vigour to Veins, more depreciated by Time than mine, and but preach Continnence and Virtue, to save yourself the pain of Yielding, where Gratitude, not Love excites? Your Heart, *Letitia*, engag'd to that false Man who has undone you, has no room to entertain a generous Passion for *Basilio*. You hate me, and not all the Friendship I have for you, and the Good that I design for you, is of efficacy to obtain what you wou'd gladly grant to the ungrateful *Eldomar*. But, *continu'd he*, when you thus stedfastly refuse the Longings of my Soul, you forget that it is in my power to gratify them when I please. This moment cou'd I triumph over your boasted Virtue, without an Obligation to you for the Favour. What became of poor *Letitia* at this Menace! she trembled lest he shou'd indeed attempt her by other means than he had yet made use of, and in the instant Agony of her Soul, she fell a second time at his feet, and conjur'd him not to entertain so cruel a Design, protesting in the most solemn manner, that

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no Consideration whatever shou'd prevail with her to survive her loss of Honour ; the more she spoke, the more Don *Basilio* was amaz'd, and the less inclin'd to prejudice a Virtue, which, tho' oppos'd to his Desire, he cou'd not but be charm'd with, yet resolv'd to try her to the utmost. Be not frighten'd, *reply'd he coldly*, I scorn to owe that to Force which Persuasions cannot make me master of ; and since you think all Virtues are compriz'd in Chastity, and seem to pride yourself in your Ingratitude to me, and obstinately refusing to comply with the only Means you have of requiting the Succour you have found from me ; enjoy your Humour—I shall forget this idle Passion when once the Object is out of sight ; but you, perhaps, will have too much cause to remember, how much you were your own Enemy, when you shall wish in vain for such a Friend to relieve the Wants you will again be expos'd to. Go, *pursued he*, and seek another Benefactor, if you can hope to find one for yourself and Child. I will no longer contribute to my own Misfortune, nor cherish the Viper which preys upon my Heart. Be gone, *contin'd he*, in the most angry Accent he cou'd assume, unworthy of my Love, and ungrateful for my Charity——not one Day more shall

shall you have shelter under this too hospitable Roof. Here he ceas'd to speak, and the disconsolate *Letitia* made use of her utmost Efforts to suppress that Torrent of Tears, which in spite of her pour'd down her Cheeks, while she reply'd to him in these Terms: To affect to hear unmov'd, my Lord, *said she*, so terrible a Sentence, wou'd argue me as madly vain, as to be in reality insensible of it, wou'd prove me stupid. No, I both know and own the Miseries to which I must be again reduc'd—have little hope of supporting them with Life, yet will still prefer Death to Dishonour. I have but one Request to make you, and that not for myself, but Child; he has done nothing to incur your Displeasure. He will hereafter, at least if he has any thing of his Mother's Soul, deserve the Charity he shall find, by every pious Act of humble Love. Oh, throw him not off—vouchsafe to continue to the else friendless Infant that Compassion which has hitherto preserv'd him; and may all-gracious Heaven with ever open Ears regard whatever you shall ask. She had perhaps added something more, if the swelling Sighs, impatient of restraint, had not prevented the passage of her Words; and also in endeavouring to suppress them, kept her from observing the Countenance

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of Don *Basilio*, in which she might easily have read a *Tenderness* which he had not Artifice to conceal, tho' he attempted it with his utmost *Might*. 'Tis common, *answer'd he*, for those who want the Will to requite the Obligations they receive, to turn the Payment over to Heaven. I have some little Pity for your Child; but lest he shou'd grow up to be ungrateful, like his Mother, I will be rid of both at once. Hence, therefore, *pursued he*, (raising his Voice) I will not have my Heart one moment longer groan beneath the Pain your Presence gives. Soon shall I throw off a Passion so unworthy of me, while you, or perishing for Bread, or to procure a wretched Sustenance, submit your boasted Virtue to the Lust of some base Slave, who shall despise you for it, and when satiated, turn you, as I do, from his Sight and House. He had no sooner utter'd these cruel Words, than he flung out of the Room, unable to endure the Violence he did himself, to treat her in this manner.

Let any one, who has a Soul capable of Pity, be the Judge of poor *Letitia's* Distress; no Description can reach what 'twas she felt. Yet did not the Misfortunes to which she saw herself about to be expos'd, grieve her tender Nature, more than did the Displeasure of Don *Basilio* :

filio: There was something in that Gentleman, which engag'd her, even more than all the Bounties she had receiv'd from him, and which not all his present Cruelty cou'd erase; she respected him with a kind of filial Tendernefs, and the thoughts of being render'd miserable by him, was something more terrible than the Misery itself. But when she consider'd her dear Boy, for a long time accusom'd to Plenty, now going to be expos'd to Cold, to Hunger, to all the Wretchedness of Want and Beggary, Distraction was inferior to the Rendings of her tormented Brain. A while she gave a loose to Tears, and to Complaining, but strengthen'd by her Virtue, still resolv'd to dare all the Ills which threatened both him and herself, rather than become Vicious to avoid them. Oh what a noble Fortitude was this! what a glorious Conquest over her Sexes Fears! impregnable against the Assaults of Fortune, as she had been to the Allurements! Triumphant in all Temptations! She went to the Chamber, where her little Boy was diverting himself with Toys suitable to his Years; the sight of him renewing those melancholy Considerations she had lately taken so much pains to banish as Enemies to her Chastity; plung'd her afresh into a Flood of Tears, from which she
cou'd

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cou'd not presently recover herself: So much time was taken up between her Sorrows, and packing up those few Necessaries she had to carry with her, that it grew almost dark; and Don *Basilio*, who still kept in hearing, lest her Griefs shou'd hurry her to some Act of Desperation, order'd it so, as if he pass'd through the Room where she was by Accident; and turning towards her, in a seeming surprize, Are you not yet departed; cry'd he? Must I be oblig'd to call my Servants to drive you hence? It shall not need, reply'd she, I'll not presume to stay beyond your Permission; yet if you wou'd give leave that we might pass this one Night more beneath this Shelter, the Favour wou'd enhance at no small rate what you have already done. Early in the Morning will we depart, and chear'd by the warmth and light of Day, know better how to steer our unhappy Pilgrimage, than in the guideless Night. By Heaven, resum'd he, thou hast well reminded me, nothing cou'd suit my Purpose more. 'Twas in the Night my Compassion took thee in, and in the Night my Justice shall expel thee—once more I charge thee, trouble me no farther, nor attempt henceforth to ask for Succour at my forbidden Gates.

In speaking this, he pass'd out of the Room, and she with her little Son in her hand, (for he was now able to walk alone) went to the Gardener's Lodge, where she had been at first receiv'd; and changing her Clothes for those she had on when Don *Basilio* found her in the Wilderness, as being a Habit in which she should be less remarked, took her Leave of them, and the rest of the Servants, with an Agony which is not possible to be described.

Don *Basilio* from a distant Window saw her go out, and the Gates shut; after which, he perceiv'd she knelt down: he doubted not but she was offering up her Prayers to Heaven to direct her Steps; and being curious to know the manner of her Orizons, hastened through the Garden, and opening softly a little Wicket, heard her, in a low but distinct Voice, utter these words:

All-gracious Heaven, I return my humblest Thanks that thou hast enabled me to stand a Trial so severe as this I have gonethrough.—— Oh! still preserve my Virtue steddy in all Temptations.—— Be my Guide and my Conductor in the dreadful Wandrings to which I am exposed.—— And as I am sensible the Sufferings thou inflictest on me, are the just Punishment of my Disobedience to the best of Fathers, O be pleas'd to let on me, who alone am guilty, the heavy Weight of thy Indignation fall, but spare this

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this Innocent, raise him Friends to do those Offices his wretched Mother is incapable of ; and, whatever is decreed for me, bless and protect him.

Here the Object of her Devotions, being not accustom'd to the Night-Air, and growing sleepy, interrupted her with his childish Prattle : Why do you stay here, Mamma, *cried he*, shall we not go home ? Alas ! *answer'd she*, we have no home.— But come, my little Pilgrim, *continued she*, *perceiving he was crying*, Heaven will provide us one ; or if this World affords us none, we shall soon get a better, where we shall never be turn'd out. But must we not go to Bed ? *said he*. My Arms shall be thy Cradle, *resumed she*, *weeping*, and that fine Sky, which thou seest yonder, embroider'd all with silver Stars, shall be thy Canopy.— But let us walk a little farther ; should Don *Basilio* know we stay so near, he will, perhaps, be angry. No, he won't, *replied the harmless Prattler* ; I never did any thing to offend him, dear Mamma, let us go back, and ask his Pardon.— No, no, *said she*, there is an ugly Monster in his House that will devour us, call'd Vice ; I narrowly escaped becoming a Prey to it. Don *Basilio*, who heard every word that pass'd, had no longer patience to contain himself, and coming forward, Turn, *Letitia*, *said*

said he, thou Wonder of thy Sex ; thou bright Example of what Womankind should be ——— I have try'd thy Virtue, and find it so pure, so holy, that I blush to think I had a Wish to taint it. ——— Come back, my Gates, my Arms, my Heart are open to receive you in a manner you need not be afraid to enter. ——— Henceforward, never will I attempt your Honour ; all base Desires are put to flight within me, and in their room the chastest Admiration reigns.

By the Distress of *Letitia*, and by what has been said of the Grief she conceived at the ill Treatment of *Don Basilio*, may be conceived the greatness of her Joy at this unhop'd-for alteration in her Fortune ; She would have thrown herself at his feet, blessing his return to Goodness ; but he seeing what she was about to do, prevented her, by putting himself into that Posture: You teach me what I ought to do, amiable *Letitia*, *said he*, nor can I too humbly entreat your Pardon for the Terror I have occasion'd in your gentle Soul : and tho' I was far from designing to execute the cruel Purport of my Words, yet I too far presumed to prove a Virtue which I ever must adore. Oh ! cease, my Lord, I beseech you, *replied she*, to give me a Confusion, if possible, more perplexing than my late Fears, permit me still to live your humble
Slave,

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Slave the Creature of your Compassion, and wonder not at a Fortitude which I hope many of my Sex may boast in a much higher degree than I. Oh, there is none, *resumed he*, none but thy self, who could, thus tempted, have resisted.——But come, *continued he, leading her toward the Gate*, return to that House which will be honour'd with thy Presence; restore that precious Image of thy self to her appointed to take care of him; and give me leave now to entertain thee with a Passion, refined by thy Example, and therefore not unworthy thy acceptance. She replied not to these words, doubtful in what Sense to take them; and he went on in the extolment of her Virtues, till they were come within the Gate, from which he led her into a Parlor, where having made her sit down, himself call'd for the Servant who took care of her Child; and order'd she should attend him with the same diligence as if he were his Son. After this, he began to talk to her of Love, but in a manner very different from that in which he had before discours'd her on that Passion. In fine, he told her, he would marry her: But she appear'd little less shock'd at this Proposal than she had been at the other. How can I, my Lord, *said she*, receive the Honour you would do me without a manifest Forfeiture of all that

Vir--

Virtue which you say has given me a Title to it? — Has not my Child a Father, who, tho' absent, and I fear unkind, is yet the master of my Vows? — While he survives, or till the certainty of his death shall reach my Ears, can I dispose my Person to another? — No, my Lord, such a Marriage would be no more than an Adultery, and, perhaps, a greater Crime; since with Inconstancy and Perjury I should also become guilty of a prophana-tion of those sacred Ties, which none ought to enter into, without being entirely free from all others of the like nature.

Is there then nothing due to Love like mine? *resumed Don Basilio.* The Ingrati-tude of *Eldomar* sufficiently makes void the Right you gave him over you.—He comes not to claim it; has deceiv'd your Faith with a fictitious Tale.— Perhaps his Name and Country may be far distant from that he has pretended. — 'Tis possible, might be married before you ever saw his Face; or since, forgetful of the Beauties he has enjoy'd, has enter'd into those Obligations with some other.— There remains not the least probability that you will ever hear of him. — Make me not, therefore, wretch-ed for a vain Chimæra.— But to silence all your Objections at once, I will procure a Dispensation from your first Marriage be-fore

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fore I any further solicit you to a second. Alas! my Lord, *replied she*, the Church, who, without any substantial Reason, thus consents to break its own Ordinations, may justly be suspected more of Craft than true Religion. — I am assured within myself, that there is no Power on Earth can disannul the solemn Vows of Marriage, however any, who thro' Hope of Interest, or Desire of Change, may be blindly led into the partial Crime. — Oh, should some Turn of Fate bring *Eldomar* once more into my presence, how, when wedded to another, could I answer to his just Reproaches! — How would my Soul be torn between the double Pangs of Guilt and Despair, while I found my self compell'd to renounce the Man to whom by Love and Law I only appertain! How! What said *Letitia*? *interrupted Basilio hastily*, is Love as well as Law my Enemy? Can you still love the Traytor who has thus abused you? The Villain, who forgetting his own Vows, and your transcendant Charms, exposed you to the Miseries I found you in; is he worthy of a Husband, or a Father's Name, who basely quits his Wife and Child? Seems not to know there are those dear Claims upon him; and laughs, perhaps, at the Miseries he cannot but be sensible you suffer? Ah, charm-

charming *Letitia* ! let me not think your Virtue is indebted to Love for its support ; and that if *Eldomar* were more indifferent to you, *Basilio* had been less repuls'd. — Though such an Opinion would infinitely wrong me, *answer'd she*, I had rather suffer you to entertain it, than attempt to banish it by a Falshood. I hope I never should so far forget what I owe to Heaven and myself, to forfeit my Innocence for base Desires ; nor having once given my Vows, to falsify them, whatever Appearances may be against the Man in possession of them : Yet I confess, that as Love first made me *Eldomar's*, the same Affection still keeps me so. — Dear is he still to my Remembrance ; and ever must be so, till some apparent Proof he has forsaken me, shall break my Heart, and with it that link'd Tenderness which keeps in Life.

'Tis likely *Don Basilio* was not perfectly pleased with this Declaration, which she made on purpose to destroy all the hope he might conceive of gaining her. He was about to reply, when his Page brought him a Packet of Letters which had that moment been left for him by the Post. He seem'd pleased at the receipt of it, and breaking hastily the Seal of the Cover, threw it carelessly on the Table, while he perused the Contents of the Enclosure. *Letitia* rose, and

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and wou'd have withdrawn, to live at more liberty, but he would not permit her ; but in moving from her Seat, happening to cast her Eyes on the Paper, the sight of the Characters in the Supercription, made her send forth a great Shriek, which was succeeded by a Trembling, and all the signs of the most violent Disorder. Her amaz'd Lover gave over reading, and taking her tenderly in his Arms, demanded the Reason of this sudden Terror. Oh, my Lord ! I conjure you, *said she*, (breaking from his Embrace, and throwing herself at his Feet) by all the Friendship you profess to have for this unhappy Woman ; by all that Charity and Compassion, with which I know your Soul is so divinely stored, to tell me immediately the Author of those Lines. Don *Basilio*, tho' more astonish'd at this Interrogatory, and the Earnestness with which it was utter'd, than can be well express'd ; hesitated not a moment, to let her know those Letters came from his Son ; whom, since the Death of *Donna Mariana*, he had order'd to return from his Travels, and that they were written by his own Hand. But, *continu'd he*, (perceiving that his Reply made her burst into a Torrent of Tears) of what Concern to *Letitia* can be the Writing of Don *Henriquez* ? No, not of Don *Henriquez*, *answer'd she*, but of *Eldomar*——

Pardon

Pardon these Tears, my noble Lord, *pursued she*, they have a double Source; I weep for Joy that I have lov'd a Man, who, since from you descended, must be worthy of being loved——nor am I less afflicted, when I consider how wretched this discovery must make me, if you vouchsafe not a Sanction to our Vows. Sure thou ravest, *cry'd he*: What probability that *Henriquez* shou'd be *Eldomar*! thou art deceiv'd by some little Likeness there may be between the Characters—my Son had never reason to deny his Name—nor would his haughty Mind descend to wed a Maid of thy mean Birth; or having done so, wou'd not I hope be base enough to quit thee, as *Eldomar* has done. Oh, too deeply his well-known Characters are engraven in my Heart, *said she*, (still weeping.) Nor can I doubt, if *Eldomar* is *Henriquez*—all I have to fear, is, that I shall seem less worthy in your Eyes, now you know I have appear'd, perhaps, too much so to your Son—yet sure, if the undone, the wandering *Letitia* has in her any thing to engage the Affections of *Don Basilio*, when in her Virgin State, unruffled by the rude Storms of Fortune; his Son may hope a Pardon for his youthful Passion! I wonder not, *reply'd he*, *something disorder'd*, that he shou'd love you,
but

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but know not if all the Tenderneſs that Beauty can inſpire, be a ſufficient Excuse for him to enter into an Engagement, ſuch as Marriage, without my Privity. —

But why, *continued he, endeavouring to compoſe himſelf,* ſhould I ſuſpect him guilty on ſuch ſlender Probabilities? — You muſt be wholly deceiv'd, *Henriquez* never was at *Segovia*; he took ſhipping at *Portobello*, and paſs'd to *Rome*, thence to *Naples*. — Beſides, the Time of his Departure ſuits not with that in which you were forſaken by the faithleſs *Eldomar*.

Yet muſt I ſtill believe, *reſumed ſhe,* that he is the ſame. To ſatisfy you yet more, *pursued ſhe, taking a Paper out of her Pocket,* peruſe this Letter; mark well the Characters, and if I am miſtaken, confeſs I had cauſe to be ſo. She ſpoke no more at that time, being impatient till he read it; and after he had compar'd it with the other, which he had juſt receiv'd from his Son, found ſo exact an Agreement between 'em, that he no longer wonder'd ſhe ſhould believe them written by the ſame hand. All other Paſſions, however, giving way to Curioſity for ſome moments, he forbore teſtifying what were his Sentiments, till he had examin'd the Contents of the Letter, which were as follow :

To

To the most Excellent of her Sex, the
Adorable L E T I T I A.

ANgel as you are, you have not the power
of seeing into the Soul, else you would
not believe mine capable of Falshood. ———

I love you, O divine Letitia, with a Passion
which is not to be equall'd by any thing but
the Charms which have inspir'd it. ——— Can
you then suspect me of so much Injustice to my
self, as to leave you for ever? Can I, by my
own Will, be depriv'd of that Heaven your soft
Society affords? No, Death alone can pre-
vent me from returning to you in a few Months.

——— I have already told you, I go in obe-
dience to a Father's Will, to pass some Years in
Travel; I must, therefore, embark for Italy,
whence having dated a Letter to him, I will
come back, and make my impatient Love a-
mends in thy dear Arms, for all the Racks
which Absence will inflict. ——— 'Tis I only
have cause to fear, that Love alone will not be
able to defend thee from those Attacks which
will be made to the ruin of my Hopes. ———

A Father's Power, and, perhaps, a worthier
Lover, may, while I am embracing thee in Ina-
gination, tear the real Substance of my Adora-
ble for ever from my longing Bosom. ——— O
shield me from that Thought! ——— Renew thy
Vows; assure me that thou dar'st not be ano-
ther's.

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ther's. ——— In the happy Grove which has so
often befriended our meeting, will I this Even-
ing attend thee; fail not to come, as thou valu'st
the Repose, nay, the Life of the

Adoring and most Passionate

ELDOMAR.

Don *Basilio* having read the Letter, was full of various and perplex'd Imaginations: he no longer hesitated if he should believe it was written by his Son; but the Expressions in it, giving him no room to think they were married, he ask'd her how long before the Departure of *Eldomar* it had been written. She told him, but the day before, and that the Meeting mention'd in it was their last: on which, he made no scruple of declaring his Sentiments, upbraiding her, that having profess'd so strict a Virtue to him, she had already forfeited it to *Eldomar*. She burst into Tears at this Reproach; and with a Voice interrupted by Sighs, reply'd to it in these Terms: I confess, *said she*, that the Ceremony of Marriage pass'd not between us; but it was omitted for no other reason, than because he knew no Priest, on whose Secrecy we durst depend for so weighty an Affair; but there pass'd between us V;

more

more binding than any the Church ever thought on ; nor can he, dare he deny I am his Wife. Well, *said Basilio*, I have but one thing more to ask : Was *Eldomar* alone in *Segovia* ? were no Friends, nor no Attendants with him ? One old Man there was, *answer'd she*, who he told me had been an Intimate of his Father's, and of whom he seem'd to be in some awe. *Don Basilio* being now confirm'd in his mind that her Conjectures were true, concluded that old Man to be the Tutor whom he had sent with his Son. He still forbore, however, to declare himself, and continued asking her many Questions ; her Answers to them all serving but to assure him more, that *Eldomar* was no other than *Henriquez*. Whilst they were in this Conversation, his Page brought him word that his young Master was alighted at the Gate : 'Tis easy to judge the vast Surcharge of mingled Passions which at that instant overwhelm'd the Soul of poor *Letitia* ; Surprise, and Fear, and Joy at once assail'd her ; but as if half doubting what she so lately had affirmed, she ran to the Window, crying, Now my Lord ! you will be convinced, or I detected in my Error. — She was about to add something more, when *Don Basilio*, who had a thousand wild and disjointed Schemes rising in his Mind, that in-

D

stant

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stant, gave her a little pluck by the Arm ;
Hold, *said he*, I will not have you appear
till I have better determin'd what to do in
the Affair, than in this distracted Moment
I have power to do, in case *Henriquez* be
indeed the Person you take him for.—
Depart therefore, *contin'd he*, with an Air of
Authority, to your Chamber, and wait
there the Event of your Fate ; but if in re-
ality you have any thing to hope from my
Favour, or fear from my Displeasure, let
that Remembrance warn you, not to be
seen till I command. *Letitia* obey'd, and
withdrew, but with what Grief of Heart,
'tis easy to imagine.

Don *Basilio* went into another Room,
where he met his Son running with the ut-
most impatience to throw himself at his
Feet ; the first Demonstrations of Duty on
the one side, and paternal Tendernefs on
the other, being over, Don *Basilio* began to
question him concerning his Travels, which
he answer'd, as became a young Man,
who had omitted no Opportunity of im-
provement by them. But, *said the Father*,
How came you to return to Spain without
my Orders ? or being so, why was I not
made acquainted with it ? Nay, study
not for an Evasion, *pursued he*, perceiving
Confusion in his Face ; I know you pass'd
some time, about four Years since, near the
City

City of *Segovia*. My Lord, reply'd Don *Henriquez*, you always told me that nothing was so unlike a Man of Honour, as to deny the Truth: I will therefore chuse to lay open all the Faults of my inadvertent Youth, depending on your Goodness for Forgiveness, rather than deceive you by a forg'd Tale. It was my misfortune to quarrel with the Nephew of Don *Valerio*, at that time Vice-Roy of *Naples*; I left him wounded in the Field, I then thought mortally; to avoid the Revenge, and indeed Justice of the Vice-Roy, that worthy Man you made my Tutor, procur'd a Bark ready to set Sail for *England*, to take us in at dead of Night; for some Hours the Winds favour'd us, but a violent Storm ensuing, we lost our Main-mast, all our Rigging, and were toss'd at pleasure of the Waves; which, after a long time, taking pleasure to keep us in suspense, at last drove us on the *Spanish* Coast. Our Vessel was not in a condition to put out to Sea again; and in the Storm I lost my Man; who being too officious in giving Assistance to the Mariners, a sudden Gust of Wind took him and two others off the Fore-deck. My Tutor and myself were oblig'd to travel on foot till we came to *Segovia*; where, appearing not like your Son, I conceal'd my Name under a borrow'd one, and

52 *The Distress'd Beauty: Or,*

happening into the Company of some young Students there, I pass'd some Time very agreeably; my Tutor extremely approving my Conversation with them. We tarri'd so long till our Money was exhausted, but being well furnish'd with Bills of Exchange, which we had receiv'd from the Traders of *Naples*, in lieu of those they had receiv'd from us; we took the opportunity of the first that set out for *France*, from thence we went to *England*, *Holland*, *Brussels*, and *Germany*; and having seen all Things worthy of Observation among those different Nations, I am at last return'd to receive the Blessing of the best of Fathers. Don *Basilio* listned to him attentively all the time he had been speaking, and perceiving his Account agreed exactly with what *Letitia* had given of the time he was in *Segovia*, was now wholly confirm'd that he was the *Eldomar*, of whom she spoke: But, determin'd to make trial of his Faith; You are come, I hope, *said he*; in happy Season; my Cares, which are ever wakeful for your Interest, have found a Lady, who, if it be in Woman to make you blest, you will be so in accepting her for a Wife. He spoke no more at that time, nor was there need; a Crimson-blush o'er-spread the Face of young *Henriquez*, he look'd disorder'd, troubled, and abash'd; but recollecting him-

himself, as well as he was able; Marriage, my Lord, *answer'd he*, is a State I have not thought on yet, and take the liberty of conjuring you not to oblige me too hastily to enter into it. But when there is an Offer of great Advantage, *resum'd Basilio*, the Opportunity is not to be neglected. Happiness consisting in Content, *reply'd Henriquez*, whatever State of Life we chuse, must certainly afford it. I yet am young, unexperienc'd in the World; and shou'd but ill behave amidst the Cares, the Jealousies, the Inquietudes, which too frequently attend the Name of Husband—the Fair are full of Wiles, Deceits, and Artifices; their Caprices must be humour'd, their Foibles flatter'd, or by a prudent Management in time subdu'd: too great a Fondness, or too small a Compliance undoes them; the Extreme of Love, or a palpable Indifference, is equally dangerous to our Honour. How difficult is it to keep always in that Temper, which can alone be a security for our Wives Conduct?——I am ignorant of it, and wou'd yet a while avoid the Study. You speak too learnedly on it, *cry'd Basilio*, not to assure me you have thought much more on it, than you wou'd be known to have done——Have you not already engag'd yourself?——by Heaven you have, *conti-*

54 *The Distress'd Beauty ; Or,*
nu'd be, counterfeiting a Rage which was
far from being real. I read a Guilt in
your Eyes, which will not suffer you to de-
ceive me, tho' you wish to do it. You are
already married, and perhaps to some
mean Wretch unworthy of my Name and
House——but let me know the truth,
and that immediately, or I will throw off
the Affection of a Father, and no more
receive thee as a Son. Oh! cease, my
Lord, *reply'd the trembling Henriquez,* to
threaten me with an Ill, to which Death
itself were mean — my Heart is cleaving
but even to think how wretched your
Displeasure must make me, tho' innocent
of any Act which can occur—But to con-
vince your Faith, by all we have to fear, or
hope, or love, I swear I yet am free from
Marriage-Bonds ; nor has my fond Soul
entertain'd one Wish that way, but what,
if known, you wou'd, I'm sure, approve.
All that Indignation which *Basilio* had
before but feign'd, to draw from him the
Secret of his Passion for *Letitia*, was now
converted into a real one at this Assevera-
tion, which he imagin'd made to deceive
him ; since it was not reasonable for Don
Henriquez to imagine he wou'd ever be
brought to consent his eldest Son shou'd
wed a Wife of her mean Birth. 'Tis false,
interrupted he furiously ; I am too well in-
form'd

form'd of your shameful Amour with a Girl so far beneath thee, that I blush to think, one of my Blood cou'd so far debase himself. Come forth, *pursued he*, thou lovely Ruin of a noble Mind; for such *Henriquez* was; till thy bewitching Charms taught him Hypocrisy. *Letitia*, who had been listening all this time, and cou'd scarce restrain herself from running into a Lover's Arms, who so nobly testify'd his Constancy; no sooner heard *Don Basilio* repeat these Words, than waiting not for a second Command, she rush'd forth, and flying to *Henriquez*, My *Eldomar*, cry'd *she*, receive thy faithful Wife; nor doubt, but that thy Father will smile upon our Loves; he is all Goodness, nor will attempt to separate Hearts so firmly cemented. O my *Antonio*, *rejoin'd he*, by what strange Chance do we meet here? or why since knowing thee, thou worthy Goddess of my utmost Wishes, did my Father tax me with a base Desire? These Words, and the Name of *Antonia*, was as surprizing to *Don Basilio* as the sight of her had been to his Son; but that Lady guessing what his Thoughts were, presently deliver'd him from that Suspence, by telling him that she was the Daughter of that Nobleman, whose Servant she pretended to have been; and that the Letter

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she had showed him to prove that *Eldomār* was no other than *Henriquez*, was directed to *Letitia*, who was her Woman, to prevent any discovery of their Loves to her Father, in case by any Accident it shou'd miscarry. *Basilio* chid her gently for not entrusting him with the Secret, and then proceeded to give to their Loves the Sanction of his Blessing, and an Assurance that the next Day his Chaplain shou'd ratify the Contract they had made.

But to go about to describe the Extasy of the faithful *Henriquez*, or the Pleasure which diffus'd itself through the Heart of *Don Basilio*, to find her of a Birth which added a Lustre to her Beauty and her Virtues ; or the rapturous Expressions and endearing Embraces, with which *Henriquez* receiv'd his little Son, with his Admiration of the Fidelity of *Antonia*, requires a Pen more florid than mine. So I shall only say, all that can be conceiv'd of Joy, of Tendernefs, and pure Affection was the Portion of this happy Family.

In a few days they set out with a splendid Equipage for *Segovia*, where *Don Basilio* presented to the Signior *Garcini*, his long lost Daughter, with the Addition she had brought to his Family. The Joy of beholding her, and the discovery she had dispos'd

dispos'd of herself to a Man so worthy of her, made him easily forgive the Fault of her Disobedience; in fine, he gave her a Dowry answerable to her Birth, and the Possessions of her Husband, and there was nothing wanting to make this faithful Pair as fortunate as their Virtues merited.

Thus it is not always that we either make or marr our Fortunes by going according to the first Prospect. *Antonia* marrying *Eldomar* merely for Love, and little hoping he was more than a Gentleman of small Means, found herself the Wife of one of the richest and most powerful Grandees of *Spain*; and *Don Basilio*, in determining to oblige his Son to do Justice to the Virtues of a Woman meanly born, crown'd his Happiness with preserving for him a Daughter of one of the noblest Houses, and to which he wou'd have thought it a Blessing to be allyed, had he been less acquainted with her Perfections.





Good out of Evil :

O R,

The Double Deceit.



IN the whole Province of *Toledo*, there were no two Families more considerable, either for great Riches, or Nobleness of Blood, than those of Don *Alphonso de Estrado*, and Don *Fabritio de los Moreille*. The former, of these Gentlemen had no Heir-Male to succeed him in his vast Possessions ; but to recompense that Want, two fine Daughters, call'd *Laura* and *Marcella*, each of which would have been celebrated as the most lovely of her Sex,

Sex, did not her Sister's Charms convince the Gazer that Nature never form'd any thing so beautiful, but that it was in her power to equal it. Don *Fabritio*, on the other side, had the same number of Sons; the eldest of them, Don *Antonio*, was a Gentleman, who, to all the Endowments requisite to accomplish a Youth of Quality, had also a very graceful Person, and a fine Manner of Address peculiar to himself. The younger, Don *Julian*, yielded not to him, or any other Man, in those Perfections which are the Gift of Nature; but being of a more gay Disposition than his Brother, had been less careful in improving himself in those Studies in which the other was a great Proficient: There was, notwithstanding the difference of their Humours, a very tender Amity between them. *Antonio* endeavour'd nothing with greater earnestness, than to mollify the Indignation which Don *Fabritio* would sometimes conceive against the wildness of *Julian*; and *Julian* envied not *Antonio*, nor lov'd him the less, because he was more in the favour of their Father. Neither of them had a Secret, in which the other had not part: *Julian* made him the Confidant of all his Amours, which were pretty general; and *Antonio* conceal'd not from him the serious Passion he had entertain'd for

Donna

Donna Laura de Estrado. He talk'd to him of that Lady in such terms, as made the other look on the Praises he gave her, as meer Hyperboles: for tho' he had a Heart, that, like Tinder, was liable to be set on fire with every Spark of Beauty, and was enamour'd, after his fashion, with every fine Woman he saw, yet could he not be brought to believe any of them in reality merited the Character his Brother gave of *Laura*. They had many Arguments concerning her; and this passionate Adorer of her Charms, not able to endure his Goddess should be prophaned by the Doubts of the other, told him, he would contrive a way that he might see her, being confident there needed no more to convince him, that she was not only such as he had described her, but also infinitely exceeding all that Words could speak her, or indeed, Imagination, without seeing her, could conceive. Don *Julian* laugh'd heartily at the rage he saw his Brother in, and reply'd, that he should be glad to feast his Eyes on such a Wonder, but knew not of what dangerous Consequence it might be; since if he had done her no more than justice, he need not be inform'd how susceptible he was of Beauty, and that there was more than a possibility he might become his Rival. To which the other re-join'd,

join'd, That the Friendship between them was a sufficient Security against any such Apprehensions : and besides, he had received too much encouragement from *Laura* herself, to suffer him to think she would listen to the Pretensions of any other Man, much less his own Brother. Since so confident of her Affections, *said Don Julian*, why do you not declare the matter to *Don Alphonso*, and *Fabritio* ? Can you fear that our Father would not approve your Marriage with one of the Heiresses of the House of *Estrado* ? Or is our Family of so mean account, that you imagine your Offers should be with scorn rejected by *Alphonso* ? Neither of these, *answer'd Don Antonio*, has prevented me from declaring myself in as full a manner before the whole World, as in private I have done to my dear *Laura*. But, my dear Brother, *continued he*, a much worse Misfortune than any you have named, attends our Loves : Were she without a Dower, nay, descended from the lowest Rank of People, such is her Beauty and her Virtues, 'twould be my Pride to make her mine ; nor could *Fabritio*, when well acquainted with her Worth, disapprove my Choice ; and she, a thousand times, with words all heavenly soft, has condescended to assure me, it is not rich *Fabritio's* Heir, but *An-*
tonio

tonio she loves. Your Merits, *has she been pleased to say*, have no addition from your noble Race ; if born a Peasant, you would have been as dear to the disinterested Affections of your faithful *Laura*. — Our Loves, 'tis certain, are not indebted to Wealth, or Titles for support ; but, Oh ! a killing Blow there is to both our Hopes. Don *Alphonso*, having formerly the most tender Friendship for Don *Pedro de Mendez*, contracted *Laura*, when in her Childhood, to his Son Don *Carlos*, who is now on his Travels, and speedily expected home. 'Tis for this reason, that he has forbid my Charmer to entertain the Pretensions of any other ; and keeps her under so strict a Confinement, that but at Chapel can she be ever seen, and then attended by so many Servants, who all are Spies upon her Actions, that 'tis impossible to exchange a word. — 'Tis there, indeed, I have the opportunity of conveying Letters to her, as I kneel down near her, and receiving Answers from her : for tho' her Duenna is made the Confidante of our Loves, yet has she been able to afford us very few Opportunities of meeting : with so much Caution does the ever-wakeful Jealousy of Don *Alphonso* observe every Action of this intended Bride. She is not, however, without a Crowd of Adorers, who at distance

pay

pay their Worship; none being admitted to the blessing of her Conversation.——

Among those who testify their Passion by exterior Gallantries, such as attending her from Chapel, presenting her with Holy-Water, and Serenades under her Window, I have distinguish'd myself; but she seeming in Publick to regard me no otherwise than my less happy Rivals, my good Fortune is a Secret to all the World, except you, my dear *Julian*, and that faithful old Woman, by whose means I have enjoy'd those private Interviews which have render'd me the most bless'd of Mankind, in the assurance she has given me that I am not indifferent to her.

The two Brothers had some farther Discourse much to the same purpose on this Affair, and Don *Julian* expressing an Impatience to see the Charms he heard described in so extatic a manner, it was agreed between them, that *Antonio* should that Night give her a Serenade, and that the other, disguised like one of the Musicians, should attend him. I am very certain, *said he*, that she will come to the Window; she may do it with safety this Night, because Don *Alphonso*, with a good part of his Family, is retired to his *Villa* for a few days, and I am in expectation of having an Appointment from her before
his

his return : You will both see her, and hear her speak enough to be convinc'd that she is such as I have been able to represent, tho' not sufficient to inform you of the thousandth part of her real Excellencies ; which, every time she appears, break out in some new and more dazzling Wonder than before, and are indeed beyond what even Imagination, extensive as it is, can conceive.

Don *Antonio* never talk'd in this manner, without bringing a Smile of Incredulity on the Countenance of his Brother ; but he forbore ridiculing him any farther on the Subject, because in a few hours he expected to satisfy his Curiosity, and doubted not but to have matter enough of Raillery on the Extravagance of such a Passion, when he had been witness how little reason there was for it.

The appointed hour at length arriv'd, to put their Project in execution. Don *Julian* took care to provide himself with a Habit, and a Guittar, on which he playing excellently well, pass'd current for one of those fine Performers with which the enamour'd *Antonio* was us'd to entertain his Mistress. — They plaid some time, and a Light being set in the Window, the exquisitely lovely *Laura* appear'd in her full Pomp of Beauty. It being late,
she

she was habited only in a rich Night-dress, which hung loosely over her Shoulders, and was button'd on the Breast with a large Crociat of Diamonds. Her Hair, which was of the most beautiful and shining Black, fell part of it in careless Ringlets on her snowy Neck, and the other was confin'd in a Fillet of Jewels of several kinds; the Emerald, the Topaz, the Ruby and Carbuncle, darted their various Lustres, and spread a Blaze of Glory round her Head: Such Embelishments might have set off a meaner Beauty to vast advantage, but Don *Julian* confess'd the Aids of Art were infinitely exceeded by Nature; and that the Lustre of the Diamonds about her, shone faintly, when compared with the more sparkling Radiance of her Eyes.

The Musick over, she thank'd *Antonio* with so good a grace, and accompanied her Words with Smiles so ravishing, so enchanting, that Don *Julian*, who devour'd her Accents, and drank greedily at his Eyes and Ears, the sweet Infatuation, stood motionless, and, as it were, transfix'd with Admiration. She retired, and shut the Window; but he was rivetted to the Place on which he stood: and Don *Antonio* having three or four times spoke to him in vain, was obliged to give him a pluck by the Sleeve, to remind him of departing

Don

Don *Julian* sigh'd, and complied, but could not forbear turning several times back, and casting his Eyes to that dear Window, whence he had been bless'd with the sight of Excellencies, which, had he not beheld, he could not have imagin'd possible in Nature.

'Tis not to be doubted, but that Don *Antonio* soon began to enquire into his Opinion ; his Curiosity being as great to know his Brother's Thoughts concerning her, as the other had been to be convinced what kind of Charms they were, which had wrought so wonderful an Effect on the Heart of a Person, who, till the sight of *Laura*, had made him so, had never discover'd the least amorous Inclination : But Don *Julian*, taken up as he was, with his new Passion, had now recover'd himself enough to know how dangerous it would be to reveal it ; and as he was a perfect Master in the Art of Feigning, he disguised his Sentiments so well, that the other had not the least suspicion that he was become his Rival. I think her extremely beautiful, *said he* : I know not whether I have ever seen a Form more compleat, according to the Rules of Symmetry and Proportion : yet no Beauty has Charms for all Hearts ; I am acquainted with Ladies, who, in my eyes, are more agreeable, tho'

it may be less exact.— He utter'd these words with so cold an Air, that Don *Antonio* was half angry with his Stupidity, as he call'd it; and endeavouring to prove how much she excell'd the rest of Woman-kind, run on with so rapturous a Description of her Tendernefs, her Softnefs, the thousand Beauties which trembled in her Eyes, when all dissolv'd and melted in excess of Passion, with blushing Cheeks, and faltering Accents, she first declar'd she lov'd, and that he alone was the happy Object of it; that Don *Julian*, before o'erwhelm'd with wild Desire, was now quite drown'd in the resistless Tide, and from that moment began to resolve to let no means escape untry'd, to make himself master of his Wishes. Dear as *Antonio* had been to him, his Ruin seem'd a trifling Woe, when compar'd with that of being denied the Enjoyment of this Charmer. Rape, Murder, every thing that is shocking to Nature, and Humanity, had in them Ideas less terrible than what despairing Love presented; and as there appear'd no possibility of obtaining the gratification of his burning Passion, without the perpetration of some horrid Crime, he was ready to reconcile himself even to the worst, by the Law of Self-preservation. He feign'd an excessive Drowsiness, as soon as they

they got home, on purpose to avoid any farther discourse with *Antonio*, whose company was now grown uneasy to him; not only because he envied him the Affections of *Laura*, but also because he fear'd that he should not be always able to constrain himself so far, but that he might, by some unguarded Look, or Word, betray the Confusion of his Soul.

All that Night Sleep was a stranger to his Eyes; nor did the Day afford him any greater share of Tranquillity; restless, and incapable of Conversation, he shunn'd all Society; and enrag'd with himself for having entertain'd Wishes so injurious to the best of Brothers and of Friends, yet wholly unable even to attempt a Conquest over them, his Breast was a perfect Chaos of Perplexity and Confusion, between Remorse and Shame, Grief, Despair, and wild Desire: But never Man had on a sudden so great a change from the extremity of one Condition to the other. — Never had staggering Virtue the excuse of such a Temptation to do ill. As he was walking beneath the Arch of two Rows of stately spreading Trees, which form'd a shady Walk before the Gate of Don *Fabritio's* House, an old Woman veil'd came up to him, and calling him Don *Antonio*, put a Letter into his hand, with these words:

words : *Be careful to observe the appointed Hour, for you know how vigilant the Spies about us are.* She staid not for a Reply, expressing by the haste she made away, as well as by her Speech, the fear she was in of being seen by him.

Don *Julian* turn'd the Letter two or three times over in his hand, without having the power of opening it ; so difficult is it for a Person bred up, and accustom'd to the strictest Rules of Honour, to swerve from them. He saw it was directed for his Brother, and that the gloominess of the Walk, together with his being much of the same stature, and the Woman's Fears, which making her look about more, to see if there were any other Person near, than she did on him to whom she spoke, had all join'd to contribute to her Mistake : yet he, who but two days before, would not have been guilty of so base an Action to the worst Enemy for the World, now overcame all the Scruples he had, to commit it against the Man who was most near to him by Blood and Friendship. — See what Love can do ; and how wonderfully it can transform the Soul which gives it entrance ! He doubted not but it came from *Laura* ; not only the manner in which it was deliver'd, but also because he remember'd to have heard Don *Antonio* say,
he

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he expected to hear from her in this Absence of *Don Alphonso* ; and Inclination in a little time becoming more powerful than Virtue, he no longer hesitated, if he shou'd break the Seal, which, when he had done, he found on the inside these Lines.

To the most Worthy and Agreeable of Mankind, the Accomplish'd *Don Antonio*.

HOW much ought I to blush, when I acknowledge that nothing is so precious to me as your Presence ? and by consequence every thing which contributes to my Enjoyment of it extremely welcome. The Deceits I put on my Father to prevail on him to leave me behind him, cou'd be excus'd by nothing but the Cause which makes me guilty of them ; and I shou'd be render'd cheap and low in your Esteem, even for those Acts my love of you enforces me to commit, were you not influenced by the same degree of tender Compassion——Love easily forgives the Faults which Love occasions, and in this Passion alone Excess is Excellence——The more we dare, the more we suffer, the greater is our Merit ; and he who scruples to hazard all, deserves nothing in return but Scorn for his imaginary Flame. I flatter myself with a belief you are of his Opinion, and endeavour not to put on my Behaviour, that
Con-

Constraint, which a Diffidence of the Faith of; your Sex obliges those of mine ordinarily to have recourse to, and hope I shall never find I have been deceiv'd in my Conjecture. I conclude, that you wou'd scruple nothing within the bounds of Honour to testify the Sincerity of your Vows, or the Ardour of your Zeal; and from thence infer, I ought not to be a Niggard in the Proofs of mine——Wou'd to Heaven it were in my power to give you more and greater——yet wou'd it very much enhance the value of those you receive, cou'd you guess with what difficulties I struggle for the Means of even seeing you, or writing to you. Not a Servant in the House but is a Spy on my Behaviour; a vigilant old Aunt, who in my Father's absence is made a Guardian over me, watches my very Looks; nay, my Sister, by what Accident, I know not, having some suspicion of our Correspondence, suffers me scarce a moment from her sight; and under the pretence of Care for my Interest and Reputation, is continually infusing jealous Notions of you into the Minds of those who were before, too much for my Peace, dispos'd to fear you more than all those others from whom I have receiv'd any Testimonies of Love. I wish I had before now advis'd you against speaking to me in Publick, frequenting the Chappel where I go—you cannot imagine how much they have been alarm'd at your last Night's Serenade; that su-
per-

perſicial Gallantry, which they but ſmile at from others, appears a proof of the moſt fervent Paſſion from you ; and that I may not hereafter have an opportunity of even returning you thoſe Thanks ſuch a Civility requires, I am remov'd from that Apartment next the Street, to one that looks into the Garden——but my dear Antonio, little do they think the happy Opportunity this Situation affords our Loves ; my Chamber opens to a Gallery, whence there is a deſcent into the Garden. My Duenna has the Key in her poſſeſſion, and will attend your coming at Twelve this Night exactly ; if you can climb the Garden-wall, which being low, I believe you will find no difficult matter——but as my Siſter ſleeps in the next Room, you muſt be admitted in the dark, nor ſpeak above a Whisper. I hope I have no occaſion to remind you, how ungenerous it wou'd be to abuſe the Confidence I have in your Honour, in admitting you at ſuch a Time and Place ; the poſſibility of entertaining you at any other being denied me, will prevent you from harbouring any Thoughts to the Prejudice of my Virtue, or my Fame : and your continuing to behave with that Reſpect, with which you have hitherto ſolicited my Love, more endear you, if ſuch a thing can be, to the Affections of

Your Ever-Faithful,

Laura de Eſtrado.

I believe Don *Julian* in resolving to obey this Summons, so unexpectedly thrown into his hands, will have few of his own Sex among my Readers, who will condemn him for it. The Passion with which he was agitated, made him think the Mistake an Act of his good Genius, and that it would be a kind of Sin against himself, and the Care of his guardian Angel, to neglect the Opportunity offer'd him, of obtaining all that his utmost Wishes cou'd embolden him to hope. He examin'd the Letter again and again, and imagin'd there was something in the whole Stile of the Letter which bespoke the lovely Author, of a Constitution warm enough to be melted into any Form the Lover pleas'd ; the Words, *Love easily forgives the Faults which Love occasions*, and that, *its Excess was its Excellence*, he thought wou'd furnish him with Arguments greatly in his favour : and as for the Caution given in the Conclusion, of *behaving with the same Respect as before* ; he saw nothing in it that cou'd much alarm him, because he consider'd, that in admitting him with that Privacy into her Bed-chamber, and in the dark, no Woman cou'd have said less, even tho' she was ever so far from being in reality desirous to be obey'd. All the Remorse for the Injury he was about to

do his Brother, all the Shame for being guilty of a base Action, were now utterly eras'd from his Soul. Rapturous Expectations, impatient Longings for the blissful Moment, Imaginations all extatick fill'd his Mind ; scarce cou'd the practick Joy exceed what 'twas he felt in this delightful Theory. The blazeful God of Day at length gave way to the black Patroness of the Lover's Wish, and the dear Hour now near approaching, height'ning Desire's wild Flame ; little is it in the power of Words to represent the Suggestions, which in such a Circumstance must arise in a Heart enamour'd, like that of Don *Julian* : But not all the burning Impatience, the Racks of Longing, the tumultuous Pantings of a Breast disorder'd, even to bursting, between Pain and Pleasure, made him forget that he was to pass for another ; or confus'd him so much, as not to permit him to reflect, that all the Joys he expected must be owing to his well counterfeiting the Person of *Antonio*. He easily got over the Wall, and according to Appointment was met by the Duenna ; he distinguish'd her by the glimmering of a few Stars, and being ask'd softly, Who is there ? He answer'd in as low a Voice, Your Friend *Antonio*. 'Tis well, my Lord, reply'd she, speak not, but follow me ; he obey'd,

obey'd, and giving her his Hand, was conducted by her up a pair of Stairs into the Gallery, where both of them treading with the utmost Softness and Circumspection, they grop'd their Way into the happy Chamber. There did she leave the suppos'd *Antonio*, while she remain'd as Centry without, to give notice of any approaching Danger, or keep off with some feign'd Story all Intruders, in case any should be troublesome enough to come that way.

Don *Julian* being, on his Entrance into the Chamber, receiv'd by the Lady, and conducted by her to a Chair, began to treat her with that distant, grave Humility, which he well knew was the Deportment of his Brother; and she not in the least suspecting the Imposition, was easily deceiv'd by it. There pass'd between them for the first Hour, nothing more than chaste and virtuous Demonstrations of the most inviolable Affection; but Don *Julian*, who consider'd, that if he lost this Opportunity, he might probably never have another, and was besides little able to put so violent a Constraint on his Desires any longer; began by degrees to assume greater Boldnesses than ever the truly enamour'd *Antonio* would have attempted, till authoriz'd by the Sanction of the sacred

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cred Ceremony; and perceiving she was less angry, and also less astonish'd than he expected she wou'd be at the Liberties he took, stop'd not at being Master of such Favours, as wou'd have contented a Lover who really intended the Woman he sollicit-ed for his Wife; he was for being deny'd nothing; the last Favour in her power to grant, was what he press'd for: and when she finding his Design, endeavour'd to in-spire him with more pure Desires, and by Tears mingled with Reproaches, testify'd how deeply she resented this Change in his Behaviour: he had recourse to the Arguments she had furnish'd him with in her Letter, to strengthen those commonly made use of by Men on the like Occasions; such as, since they intended to be made one as soon as Opportunity wou'd permit, what he desir'd was but an Anticipation of their Happiness—that Love and Nature both pleaded in his behalf——that 'twas the Motives, not the Act, made Lovers criminal; and that in fine, he cou'd not live without a Certainty she wou'd never be another's; which he said cou'd not be but by the Grant of his Request. But not to detain the Curiosity of my Reader, by an immaterial relation of the Discourses which pass'd between them, it will be sufficient to say, that the Pressures of the Lover,

ver, and the Softness of the Virgin gave the Victory to Passion, and the Boldness of the supposed *Antonio*, gain'd him a Happiness which the Modesty of the real one would never have suffer'd him to ask.

The danger they were in of discovery, would not suffer them to continue long together; they were obliged to separate, but not without making an Appointment of renewing the Felicities they had so lately tasted, the next Night.

Don *Julian* could now hear his Brother speak of the Charms of *Donna Laura* without any other Emotions than what proceeded from the Concern he was in, to think what Distractions would ensue, to the total breach of their former Amity, when the whole Secret should be discover'd, and the wronged *Antonio* be sensible how he had been undermin'd by the Person he most trusted and valued on Earth. The wildness of his Passion being abated by the enjoyment of his Wishes, all the Love he had bore his Brother, before it was interrupted by this unhappy Flame, now resumed its former residence in his Soul; he regretted the Injury he had done him, he lamented the Grief he knew it must occasion him; he trembled at the Reproaches it would bring upon him; the Indignation of Don *Fabritio*, when he should

be inform'd of it ; and was also something troubled for the Lady, whose Shame and Grief might, perhaps, be fatal to her, when she should know she had yielded to a Stranger's Arms those Favours which she could scarce be brought to forgive herself, for not bestowing on the Man who long had lov'd her, and who a thousand times had vow'd to become her Husband. In fine, having now regain'd his Reason, he made no other use of it than to torment himself ; and Reflection was so severe upon him, that he was, at some times, ready to revenge his Brother's Wrongs with his own Blood. Nor could the repeated Possession of the Charms, which every Night he enjoy'd, be sufficient to alleviate the Stings of Guilt.

Don *Antonio* was all this time in the most bitter Inquietudes ; he had received no Letter from *Laura*, as he had expected, with an Appointment, and could not imagine what should be the cause of so unusual a Coldness. He was just bethinking himself of some Stratagem to convey a Letter to her, when he heard that all on the sudden she was retired to her Father's *Villa*. — There was something so very strange in this Behaviour, that he could neither reconcile it to Reason, nor the Character of the Woman he ador'd. — He

lamented his Misfortune to Don *Julian* in Terms so tender and so moving, that the grieved Penitent was ready to expiate that moment the Offence he had been guilty of, by plunging a Dagger into his own guilty Breast ; and, in the last Pangs of his departing Life, confess his Crime, and ease the sorrowful *Antonio* of the Rack of Doubt, by telling him the Cause of *Laura's* Silence, was, that believing she had pass'd every Night in his Arms, she thought no more was wanting for his satisfaction : But Shame prevented him from making such an Eclaircissement, and he sustained a Life which was more cruel to him than a thousand Deaths.

In some little time after, however, he found a way to mitigate part of Don *Antonio's* Disquiets, by telling him, that he had heard by Accident, that Don *Alphonso* was indisposed, and that his sudden Disorder had made him send for both his Daughters with so much speed.— It was not, therefore, *said he*, in Donna *Laura's* power, hurried away in that manner, to give you notice of her departure ; and I would have you comfort yourself, my dear Brother, in the Assurance that you are not less be- lov'd by that Lady, than you have thought yourself, and she has sworn.

Antonio embraced him as he spoke these words, which, with the Intelligence he gave him, was perfectly reviving to his Soul : Nor was it an Imposition ; for, in the last Meeting of the amorous Pair, she had inform'd *Don Julian*, that she was obliged to leave *Toledo*, and with her Sister attend the Recovery of *Don Alphonso* at his *Villa*.

In this position were the Minds of the two Brothers, and thus did they continue for near four Months ; so much Time elapsing without hearing any other news of the Family of *Don Alphonso de Estrado*, than that he was at last recover'd from a long and dangerous Disease, and expected soon to return to *Toledo*. 'Tis needless to say how much *Antonio* long'd for the hour of his arrival, which flatter'd him with a probability of renewing his Conversation with his dear *Laura* ; or with what Anxieties the Soul of *Julian* was oppress'd, when he consider'd how much impossible it would now be, to keep the Treachery he had been guilty of, from the knowledge of his Brother.

By what has been already said of the Humours and Conduct of both, the Reader will easily conceive their different Agitations : But before the Time so much desired by the one, and fear'd by the other ;
was

was approached, a Letter from Don *Alphonso* was brought by one of his Servants to the hands of *Fabritio*, as he sat at Table with his two Sons; which perusing to himself, they observ'd, made him change Colour two or three times: both of them had their Perplexities, though for different Conjectures; and instead of being eas'd of any part of them, found themselves more involv'd: when Don *Fabritio* having order'd every body in the Room beside them to withdraw, he gave *Antonio* the Letter, and, with an angry Tone, commanded him to explain the Riddle it contain'd. The young Gentleman, who presently imagin'd it contain'd a discovery of his Passion for *Donna Laura*, took it from the hands of his Father, and with a trembling and confused Voice, read aloud these Lines:

TO DON FABRITIO de los MOREILLE.

Ignorant of the Wrong done to my Family by one of yours, (as the good Opinion I have of your Honour, and your Virtue makes me hope) I beg the favour of seeing you at my Villa, my Weakness not yet permitting me to travel so far as Toledo; and the Business on

which I would discourse you, is not of a nature to admit delay.—— Bring Antonio with you, but suffer him not to appear in my presence, unless he comes prepared to redress the Injury he has done me, or expiate it by his Blood.—— Farewel; I would preserve Friendship between us, if possible; and am, as I shall find you just,

Yours,

ALPHONSO de ESTRADO.

I know not, my Lord, *said Antonio*, of what Injury he complains, and am as much surpriz'd why you should seem to point me out the guilty Person, who with design have never given Affront to any one, much less to a Man of Don *Alphonso's* Quality and Worth. No, no, *answer'd Don Fabritio peevishly*, the Wrong he mentions, I suppose not to infer your Civilities have been too remiss, but the contrary. —— I fear you have too far acted the Courtier to his Daughter *Laura*. —— I have heard of your Gallantries there, and condemn myself that I did not endeavour to restrain them, by laying my Commands on you to the contrary. —— You know, and so does all *Toledo*, that she is already disposed of to *Don Carlos de Mendez*; and he
who

who attempts the Honour of a Woman in her Husband's absence, in the opinion of all honest Men, is more vile than the Midnight Thief, who breaks in upon his less valuable Treasures; the one may be repair'd, the other cannot. You speak my Judgment, my Lord, *resumed* Antonio; and were I guilty of so base a Thought, should have nothing to alledge in vindication of it. But if you think your own illustrious Example, and the virtuous Precepts which from my earliest Childhood you have taken care to instruct me in, be not sufficient to render it impossible I should be guilty of a Crime like this, here I protest, and call all-seeing Heaven, and every Saint to witness, I never had a Wish for the accomplish'd *Laura*, but what the chastest Soul might read without a Blush, and the guardian Angel of that lovely Maid approve and bless. — I own I love, nay, am even an Adorer of her Charms; will not deny but that I have declared my Passion, and that she has vouchsafed, without Disdain, to hear me: and sure, my Lord, as she is not yet a Wife, and, perhaps, may never be to him whom her Father, while either of them were incapable of chusing for themselves, intended her; an honourable Passion, with Respect avow'd by one of equal Birth and Fortune, has no relation to an
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Injury, such as his Letter seems to hint at So intimate a Correspondence unknown to Parents, however, is a Fault in both of you, *said* Fabritio; yet if no more has pass'd than what you have confess'd, I think that cannot be the Crime he mentions. But 'tis idle to lose time in vain Conjectures, I am no less impatient to hear your Defence, than *Don Alphonso* is to accuse you. — Prepare, therefore, for a speedy departure, we will set out to-morrow; if innocent, the more Courage will accompany you. *Antonio* assur'd him of a ready compliance, and was, indeed, rather rejoyc'd than the contrary at this Journey, hoping he should, at least, be permitted to see *Laura*.

Don Julian all this while spoke not a word, but labour'd under Agonies which are not to be express'd. He was now positive that the Crime he had been guilty of, was that which unjustly was charged upon his Brother, and again resolved to declare the whole truth. — He more than once open'd his mouth to do so, but then a second Thought rose in his Breast, that there was a possibility of concealing it yet awhile longer. Hearing them resolve on going, he entreated his Father that he might attend him; pretending, that since *Alphonso* mention'd in the close of the Letter,

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the Blood of *Antonio* must expiate his Offence, he might be of service in case any foul Play should he offer'd to that dear Brother. Don *Fabritio* suspected no such matter; but, on his earnest Pressures, at last consented he should go with them.

Nothing happening worthy of Remark in the little Journey they were to take, I shall pass the Particulars of it in Silence; my Reader being, doubtless, impatient to know by what means Don *Alphonso* became acquainted with the Fault his Daughter had committed against her Honour; or whether it was in reality that which made him write in the manner he had done to Don *Fabritio*. But to render all things plain, I must go back to the Time in which Don *Antonio* and *Laura* had frequent Conversations with each other.

In the beginning of this History I mention'd a younger Daughter of Don *Alphonso*, call'd *Marcella*; the frequent Serenades given to her Sister by *Antonio*, made her presently conclude him her Lover.— She had several times seen him at Chapel, where, 'tis probable, he came more to pay his Adorations to an earthly than a heavenly Saint. She was charm'd with the Graces of his Person, and languish'd between a hopeless Flame, and the Envy she conceiv'd at the Happiness of her Sister.—

Long

Long had she been contriving, but in vain, some means of obliging him to take notice of her; but his whole Soul being taken up with the too powerful Charms of the attractive *Laura*, observ'd her not when she let fall her Handkerchief on purpose that he should take it up: nor when she threw back her Veil at Chapel, pretending Over-Heat, there was nothing in her Eyes, (tho' in others opinion, as lovely as those of her Sister) that fix'd him to gaze on them.— She easily found he was too deeply attach'd, to look on any other Woman with Emotions such as she wish'd to inspire, and was ready to consume with inward Anguish, when an Accident happen'd beyond her hopes, to relieve her from those Perplexities. She was lying in a Grove, indulging her discontented Meditations, when she perceiv'd her Sister, and the Duenna which attended them both, coming up a Walk, and seeming earnest in Discourse. She had for a long time had a suspicion that that old Woman carried on an Intrigue between the eldest of her Mistresses, and the agreeable *Antonio*; and this private Conversation confirming her Conjecture, she withdrew behind a close Thicket, and laying herself on the Grass, was entirely hid by the overshadowing Branches of some Trees, whose Roots disdain'g to be confin'd in Earth,

Earth, shot up in little Branches, which to make amends for want of height, grew so thick, that they form'd a Wood in Miniature. — In this Position it was easy for her to hear what pass'd between this envied Sister, and her Confidante, who pass'd directly into the Grove, and seated themselves not twenty Paces distant from the Place where she was conceal'd. And soon after, — I wonder, Madam, *said the Duenna*, what you think will be the end of this Adventure? — Certain I am, nothing but Mischief can possibly ensue. — Don *Alphonso* will never be brought to break the solemn Promise he has made to Don *Pedro de Mendez*, in favour of his Son Don *Carlos*. — You cannot marry *Antonio*, and should your private Meetings reach either your Father or intended Husband's Ears, how dreadful would be the Consequence? Not only I, as the Promoter and Favourer of your Amour, must fall a sacrifice to Jealousy, and suspected Honour, but also the Man you love. — For his sake, then, if not for your own, desist in time. You yet are safe, but may not always be so. — How often have I entreated thee, *said Laura*, to speak no more on so unwelcome a Theme? I am too well acquainted with the Misfortune which attends our Loves, to need to be reminded of

of it. But, be assured, whatever my Father has decreed in favour of *Don Carlos*, or may hereafter determine as a Punishment for my Disobedience, I never will consent to be call'd Wife by any but *Antonio* ; he is my first, and shall be my last Love ; and, if I wed not him, the Grave shall be my Bride-bed.

But, prithee, *continu'd she*, as thou hast already befriended the soft Wishes of both our Souls, be still consenting to our stolen Happiness — Thou know'st 'tis with the utmost Honour that we love, nor is it a Crime to indulge a virtuous Passion for a worthy Object. Carry him this Letter, it contains an appointment of seeing him this Night. My Father's Absence gives you an Opportunity more secure than ever we have had — do not you too become our Enemy. Well, *resum'd the other*, I will venture once more, but you have no Consideration of the Hazards I run in being seen to speak to him, shou'd any one be near, who shou'd acquaint your Father. To testify that I am not ungrateful, *answer'd Laura*, take that ; and at the same time gave her a Purse of Gold. The Musick of that Chink remov'd all Scruples, and she protested she wou'd go immediately in search of him. On which they separated : *Laura* went back into the House,
and

and the old Woman towards a Gate which open'd into another Street. *Marcella* had no sooner lost sight of her Sister, than presently bethinking herself, what use she shou'd make of this Discovery, she rose from her Covert, and hastning after the Duenna, call'd to her to come back. I cannot now, Madam, *answer'd she*, being sent on urgent Business. 'Tis none that I am ignorant of, *resum'd the Lady passionately*; and if you refuse to obey me, my Father shall this Night by a Letter from me be made acquainted with what sort of Guardian he has entrusted the Honour of his Children with. These words, and the sight of her so near the Place where she had been discoursing with *Laura*, were sufficient to alarm a Person of more Courage: She did not doubt but their Conversation had been overheard, and trembled lest *Marcella* shou'd perform no less than she had threatned. The young Lady perceiving her Confusion, Come, *said she*, be not frighten'd; if you will keep my Secret as faithfully as you have done my Sister's, and assist me in the same manner, I will not only conceal what you have so much reason to dread should be discover'd, but also double the Bounties you have receiv'd from her. These Promises a little reviving her, she withdrew with her

her into the Grove, where she had lately been, and heard from *Marcella* the History of her Passion for *Antonio*. She started to find, that the Task enjoin'd her was to bring them together; well knowing the Constancy of that faithful Lover was not to be shaken: but *Marcella*, who wanted not Wit or Invention, soon contriv'd the Means of passing for her Sister. Instead of that Letter, *said she*, you shall carry another of different import; but so exactly can I counterfeit the Character of *Laura*, that it will be impossible for him to perceive the difference. They had a great deal more of discourse toward fashioning the Plot, so as not to be liable to discovery: and because that whenever *Antonio* shou'd meet the real *Laura*, it must certainly be known to him that he had been impos'd on by a counterfeit one; it was concluded between them, that they shou'd be kept asunder as much as possible: for which reason, *Marcella* wrote in the name of her Sister, that her Apartment was changed, and that there was notice taken of the Gallantries he paid her, and forbid him even to come to offer his Devotions at the same Chapel. To make this Design more effectual, the Duenna told *Laura* that she had deliver'd her Letter to *Antonio*, but that being that moment about to take horse

horse for a Journey, he cou'd not receive the Happiness she promis'd that Night, nor he fear'd for a long time, *Don Fabrizio* having commanded him to a Place whence he could not easily return.

All things succeeded as *Marcella* wish'd, nothing could be more artful than the Letter she wrote for her Sister ; and the *Duenna* told her Tale concerning the departure of *Antonio*, with such an Air of Sincerity, that *Laura* was far from suspecting the Treachery used to her.

What ensued, the Reader is acquainted with, concerning the Mistake which introduc'd *Don Julian* in his Brother's Place ; and the Advantages his presuming Passion gain'd over the imaginary *Laura*—— Equally deceiv'd by each other, both thought themselves bless'd for a time ; but the Remorse which in the Breast of *Julian* succeeded his Transports, having been already related, I must now proceed to inform my Reader, in what manner the too fond *Marcella* was punish'd for violating the Ties of Friendship to her Sister, and the Rules of Virtue she had prescribed to herself.

The repeated Pleasures she had indulged with *Don Julian*, were succeeded by a natural Consequence ; she had not been long at the *Villa*, before she perceiv'd an altera-
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teration in herself, and soon after, the care she took to conceal all Symptoms of it from the World became fruitless.——Her Eyes grew dull and languid, her Cheeks pale and thin.——Her fine taper Shape, swell'd to an unwieldy Bulk; and all her Shame was visible.——Don *Alphonso*, however, ascribed the change he saw in her, to some other Disease, and was about to send for Physicians; but was prevented by an old Relation, who liv'd in the House with him, and better skill'd, saw into the Truth, and acquainted him with it.

Never was Surprize and Rage more violent in any Heart than that of his, at these Tidings.——He vow'd, in the first Emotions of his Passion, to wash away with her Blood, the Dishonour she had brought on his Family; but she who had reveal'd it to him, would not suffer him to see her, till there was some abatement of so dangerous a Fury. Impatient to find out the Author of this Misfortune, *Laura* was question'd what she knew concerning it; but she, as ignorant and amazed, as if what she heard had been an Impossibility, soon convinc'd her angry Father she was innocent of the Confidence of her unhappy Sister. —— The *Duenna* was the next Person examin'd; but with so many Imprecations she denied any knowledge of the Affair,

Affair, that *Alphonso*, who was himself all Sincerity, could not avoid giving credit to her words. But no longer able to remain in this uncertainty, he would not be kept from the Chamber of *Marcella*; when, partly by Menaces, and partly by the Persuasions of that old Relation, she at last confess'd so much of the Truth, as that she was with Child, and mistaken herself in the Person, involv'd those who were present in the same Error that it was to *Don Antonio* she owed her Shame: But the manner in which he had been introduced to her Acquaintance, or the Place of their guilty Meetings, she would by no means be brought to discover; having taken a solemn Oath to the *Duenna*, that she wou'd, on no consideration, betray her; which, in relating the Measures she had taken to ensnare *Don Antonio*, she could not have avoided.

After this, 'tis needless to repeat the reason of *Alphonso's* Letter to *Fabritio*; or to an understanding Reader, the distraction of *Laura*: All that can be conceiv'd of Grief, was mean to that which rack'd her tender Heart. She thought herself certain to have been most faithlessly betray'd by the Man in whom she put all confidence; to have been not only forsaken by him, but also to have been made the Property
of

of his guilty Passion for her Sister ; and sure a Mind the least susceptible, must acknowledge such Injuries, such Treatment, must create the most poignant Agonies. She fell into Convulsions, at hearing the Name of *Antonio* mention'd by her Sister, as the Author of her Ruin ; from which she was but with great difficulty recover'd, and continued in a condition so deplorable, that when *Fabritio* and his Sons arrived, her Life was despair'd of : Her Sorrows bringing also to light the Secret of her Love for *Antonio*, and the Pretensions he had made to her, was a very considerable heightening of the Indignation which Don *Alphonso*, on his other Daughter's score, had before conceived against him.

When he was told that Don *Fabritio* was alighted, he commanded he should be conducted to his Closet ; where, as soon as he saw him, Join with me, Don *Fabritio*, cried he, in an excess of Rage and Sorrow, to curse *Antonio*, who so ill has copied from his Father's Pattern, and takes a pride in Ruin and Destruction.——If guilty of any Crime which ought to transport you thus, replied *Fabritio*, not only my Curses, but my Sword shall do you justice on the Offender's Heart, were he a thousand times my Son.—— But, I beseech you, keep me not in ignorance of his Crime, that I may know

know what 'tis I ought to do, either in his Vindication or Condemnation.—When I writ to you, *resumed* Alphonso, I knew but half his Guilt, and hoped Marriage might have been a Cure for the wounded Honour of my youngest Daughter, by him seduced from Virtue, and now pregnant with her Shame. — But since, there is reveal'd a fatal Aggravation of his Guilt; *Laura*, my first-born Darling, and contracted to the Son of my most intimate and best-lov'd Friend, by his undoing Artifices won from her Obedience and Regard of every thing but the same vile *Antonio*; lies now despairing ever to rise again, through Grief for his Deceits, his monstrous Perjuries, her own Credulity, and her Sister's Ruin. — But from their own Mouths, *pursued* he, shall you receive the truth, and be convinc'd. — In speaking these words, he took his hand, and led him to a Room where *Marcella* sat bewailing her unhappy State; and by her Father was compell'd to own before *Fabritio* what she had already confess'd to him; which he heard with an Astonishment not to be express'd: so I shall only say, that it was so great it took from him the power of Speech for a considerable time. At length, recovering himself as from a deep study, — It must be so, cry'd he, in

a transport of Rage ; the well-known Integrity and Honour of Alphonso, and the Modesty of this ruin'd Virgin, would not suffer them to accuse my Son unjustly. —

Antonio is the greatest Hypocrite in nature.

— His Sobriety, his Temperance, his Honesty, all his Virtues are counterfeit, and I am the most deceiv'd, and wretched Father in the Universe. — But call him forth, noble *Alphonso* : there is no Punishment you can inflict upon him, which I shall think severe enough for such a doubly damn'd Impostor.

As he had just ended these words, *Don Antonio* and *Don Julian* enter'd the Room ; the latter having forc'd the former to come in unilent-for, telling him he knew on what their Fathers were discoursing, and it lay in his power alone to unfold the Mystery which had involv'd them all in this Perplexity. But neither of them had time to speak ; *Don Fabritio*, almost beside himself with honest Indignation at the sight of him whom he believed had so much deceived his good Opinion of him, and the tender Affection he had bore him, considering him now no longer as his Son, laid hold on the innocent *Antonio*, and drawing his Sword, had, perhaps, that moment reveng'd the Wrongs of *Alphonso*, by a Deed which afterwards would have driven him to
Mad-

Madness, had not *Julian* rush'd between his defenceless Brother and the uplifted Weapon; and *Marcella*, by her Shrieks, endeavour'd to prevent the dreadful Blow.

— Hold, my Lord, cry'd *Julian*, spare the innocent *Antonio*, and on the guilty *Julian* let your whole weight of Fury fall.—— Yet e'er I receive that Punishment which I confess my Crime deserves, permit me to reveal a Secret, which, but by me, you never can be inform'd the truth of.—— It was I, who under the Covert of the Night, and Sanction of my Brother's Name, obtain'd admittance to the beauteous *Laura*, and perpetrated that Act of which he is accused.—— *Laura!* cry'd *Alphonso*, has she also been abused this way? —— Oh, wretched Sisters! most unhappy Father! More Villany in my Family! *rejoin'd* *Fabritio*. Oh! that I had died, that my Bride-bed had been my Grave, rather than have liv'd to beget two Sons like these.—— The heavenly *Laura* violated, and by thee! *added* *Antonio*.

All these Exclamations were made almost at the same time; and scarce could be heard distinctly by any but *Marcella*, who, by the Tone of Don *Julian's* Voice, as well as by his Words, had some suspicion of the Truth; and rising from her Seat, —— Forbear, my Lords, said she,

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and permit me to ask this Gentleman (*pointing to Julian*) a few Questions. On which, they all being silent, Tell me, *pursued she*, Don *Julian*, for so I perceive you are called, did you ever come to *Laura* in your Brother's name? Madam, I did, *answer'd he*. By whom were you admitted? *resumed she*. By her Duenna, *return'd he*. And, in which Chamber? *demand'd she again*. What part of the House was it, in which you took advantage of her fatal Kindness? A Room next the Garden, *replied he*.—— I well remember it, because her Letter, which, by a mistake of the *Duenna's*, I receiv'd instead of *Antonio*, to whom it was directed, appointed me to come that way, her Apartment being chang'd to one which led into the Gallery. —— My Orders were to leap the Walls, which having done, the trusty Confidante receiv'd me at the bottom, and conducted me up a pair of Back-stairs, into her Lady's Chamber; where many succeeding Nights, as well as that, I triumph'd in my Guilt, and wrong'd my Brother's chaster Hopes. Enough, enough, *cry'd Marcella*, spare my farther Shame. —— I am that wretched Woman, who envying my Sister a Lover like *Antonio*, contrived this Stratagem to deprive her of him; and justly am I punish'd for my Deceit, as *Julian* thou art
for

for thine, in being disappointed of thy Aim, and being subjected to the just Rage of both our Fathers.

Never was a Scene of so much Sorrow so suddenly alter'd to its contrary. Instead of Rage against Don *Julian*, *Antonio*, transported with Joy to find his *Laura* safe, embraced his Brother; *Alphonso* approving of an Alliance with *Fabritio*, told him, that since Fate had seem'd to dispose these young Persons, even against their Inclinations, to Acts which were not like themselves, it must certainly be decreed above that they should be united. *Fabritio* agreed, and *Julian* regarding *Marcella* with an infinity of Tendernefs, and rejoicing to find himself not so guilty as he had imagin'd, consented with Pleasure to become her Husband. She receiv'd him as such with the same Transport; and both being now entirely cured of their former Passions, they flew into each other's Arms with Raptures more sincere than when they met the Representatives of other Persons.

This Affair being so happily over, *Alphonso* entreated the whole Company to go into *Laura's* Chamber, expressing a Desire that she should be convinc'd of the Innocence of the Man she lov'd; protesting at the same time, that had not his solemn

Promise been given to *Don Pedro de Mendez*, nothing should have hindred him from compleating their Loves. — *Antonio* return'd this Compliment only with a Sigh, and follow'd 'em with a disconsolate Look into the Room. — At the sight of him, *Laura* immediately turn'd away her Head, as not being able to endure the presence of so ungrateful and perfidious a Man. — But *Marcella*, now truly repenting her former Deceit, and perfectly satisfied with her present Condition, run to the Bed-side, and related at full the History of what she had done, the various Consequences attending it, and the unlook'd-for Success.

'Tis no difficult thing for the Reader to conceive the Transport this late afflicted Beauty was in at the unexpected discovery of her Lover's Innocence. — She gave a Loose to it, though in the presence of her Father ; but one of the Servants coming in with a Letter for *Don Alphonso*, whilst they were in this Conversation, he retired to the farther end of the Room, that he might with less interruption examine the Contents.

During this interval, she said such tender things, as at another time, or in any other Circumstance, her Modesty would have scrupled. — But soon had she a liberty

berty of indulging all she could desire to speak or act.—— Don *Alphonso* returning, after having read the Letter, Now, said he, addressing himself to Antonio, with a pleasant Air, if Don *Fabritio* consents, and *Laura* lives, your Marriage may be celebrated with your Brother's.—— You have my hearty Consent, for I am released from my Promise; Don *Carlos* is dead, and my Daughter *Laura* is at full liberty to dispose of herself according to her Inclinations.

Were it possible, as some alledge, that Excess of Joy can kill, *Antonio's* had certainly been fatal to him.—— He threw himself on his Knees, to Don *Alphonso*, embraced his Feet, and expressed himself in Terms, which no false Love could feign.

Don *Fabritio* was rejoyc'd, and express'd an agreeable Satisfaction at so happy a Turn; and none thought themselves more pleas'd in this Union, than those who had sought so much to prevent it, *Marcella* and *Julian*.—— So fortunate a Change in her Affairs, brought a speedy recovery to the virtuous and beautiful *Laura*; and, in a few days, the two Weddings were celebrated with a Pomp becoming the Quality and Tenderness of the Contrivers of it. Both liv'd

afterwards in a perfect Tranquillity, but neither made choice of the Duenna for an Attendant; but wholly abandon'd her for the future.



Female



Female Revenge ;

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The Happy Exchange.



IN the Usurpation of *Oliver Cromwell*, when Villains only prosper'd, and all Principles of Honour, Honesty, and Faith, seem'd banish'd with the Royal Race; among the Number of those unhappy Gentlemen, whose Loyalty cost them their Lives, was Sir *Thomas Bellcourt* : He fell in the beginning of those Wars, which ended in the eternal Shame of *England*; less unfortunate in Death, than to have liv'd to see the ensuing Miseries of his Country. He left one Son, then incapable of bearing Arms ; but his Youth being no Plea

against the rapacious Greediness of that all-devouring Tyrant, and his curs'd Associates, not the least part of his Father's large Estate was suffer'd to devolve on him ; it was all confiscated by Arbitrary Power ; nor would they allow him the smallest Support, tho' born to full Four Thousand Pounds *per Annum*. He was about fourteen Years of Age when he lost his Father ; and his Mother being dead some time before, he was utterly destitute of all Advice which might be depended on, as well as of the Means of obtaining even the most common Necessaries of Life. For those inhuman Traytors having rifled the House, afterward set it on fire, burning all they could not take away. By this means was this young Gentleman, now a Baronet, driven to seek both Food and Lodging, from the hands of Strangers : Few daring to relieve a Branch of the *Cavalier* Party, his Distress was the most moving that could be ; but being possess'd of a more than ordinary share of Spirit, he yielded not to his Misfortunes ; and bethinking himself of an Uncle he had at *Cadiz*, he begg'd his way till he came to *Portsmouth*, relating his melancholy Story to as many as he met, and exciting Compassion from all whose Hearts were not steel'd with Avarice and Cruelty.

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The Charities he received, brought him to the Port, where he was so fortunate to find a Ship ready to embark; into which being taken, a prosperous Gale attended him 'till he arrived at his desired Harbour. His Uncle, who was a wealthy Merchant, received him with all possible Demonstrations of Kindness, and having no Child of his own, rejoiced that it was in his power to make his Sister's Son the Heir of his Riches. He immediately provided him with Masters to perfect him in those Exercises he had but begun to practise before the Calamity of his Family, and by the time in which he arrived at the Age of Twenty, there were very few Gentlemen more accomplish'd than young Sir *William Bellcourt*. To add to his other Perfections, he had a sweetness of Disposition which gained him the love of all that knew him; but an excess of Good-Nature is too often of ill consequence to those possess'd of it. The Fair experience it in the loss of Fame, of Virtue, Interest, and Peace of Mind; and Sir *William*, tho' of a Sex which is generally endued with a greater Share of Judgment and Resolution, found all his manly Fortitude too weak to defend his Heart from the soft Impulse of the tender Passion; dearly did he love a beauteous Maid, and tho' far beneath him in Birth, and of so

mean a Fortune, that he cou'd not hope his Uncle, whose Heir he was now declar'd, wou'd ever consent to such a Match; yet did he regard her with so perfect a Tendernefs, that he cou'd neither live but in the hope of poffeffing her; nor entertain one thought of endeavouring to acquire that Happinefs, but by fuch means as were for her Honour and Advantage. He had, however, fo much Confideration of his own Intereft, becaufe it was alfo hers, as not to fuffer the knowledge of his Paffion to come to the ears of his Uncle; not doubting but he wou'd have let no means efcape of feparating them, if poffible. — *Climene*, for fo fhe was call'd, had two Sisters and a Mother, all which were privy to the Addreffes made her by *Belcourt*; and perceiving the extraordinary Paffion he had for her, fet all their Wits to work to perfuade him to a private Marriage with her. Tho' there was nothing he fo much defired, yet the Apprehenfions that it might fome way or other come to the ears of his Uncle, made him very fearful to confent — He contracted himfelf to her in the prefence of them all, in the moft folemn manner imaginable; but that was not fufficient to content them; the old Lady reprefented to him the Falfhood of Mankind in general, how little they regard Promifes of
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that nature, when once the Inclination which induced them to be made, was worn off by Time, Absence, or the Sight of a new Object; and gave him a great Number of Examples of Men, who had not scrupled to forfeit the most strict Engagements thro' a mutability of Humour; concluding her long Discourse with a solemn Vow, that from that Moment he must no more see *Climene*, unless as his Wife. So terrible a Menace entirely destroy'd all Considerations, but those of averting it; he yielded to her Desires, and chose rather to run every Hazard, than incur the Certainty of losing her.

Having complied, a Priest, who was before prepared for that purpose, was presently call'd in, and our obedient Lover was now converted into a Husband: He made no other use however of the Authority that Title gave him, than to oblige all that were present to take a Vow never to reveal what he had done during the Life of his Uncle, which they willingly consented to, knowing the Misfortune such a Discovery wou'd involve them in, as well as himself.

Having done thus much to prove the Fidelity of his Affection, he wou'd not be denied the reward of it, and in the Pleasures of Enjoyment soon forgot the Dangers

gers to which it exposed him. ——— Some busy People observing his frequent Visits, at last inform'd his Uncle of it, who altogether as averse to a thought of Marriage there, as *Bellcourt* imagined he would be, talked to him very seriously, and with some warmth, concerning the Reasons of his Conversation with *Climene*; he told him it wou'd be dishonourable and base to stain the Character of a Maid whose only Dowry was her Fame and Virtue, and that he hoped he had no Intentions of making her his Wife; assuring him if he had, she shou'd have nothing to boast of in her Marriage with him. *Bellcourt*, who was by this time perfectly acquainted with the Disposition of his Uncle, and knew him to be fixed in all his Resolutions, even to a degree of Obstinacy, instead of arguing with him as he might have done on the Merits of his Choice, and pleading the force of his own Passion, which wou'd not suffer him to live without her, chose rather to affect an Indifference; and made use of an Equivocation, which the Necessity of his Affairs rendered not altogether inexcusable; he began with an Air rather gay than serious, to assure his Uncle, the only Reasons that had made his Visits so frequent at that House, was, that the Lady's being of a more free Deportment than the *Spanish* Women ordinarily

dinarily are, was more agreeable to a Person bred in *England*, than any he cou'd meet with in *Cadiz*;——but as for Marriage with *Climene*, or either of her Sisters, he protested he never wou'd: —— Nay, *added he*, had *Climene* a Fortune equal to what your Bounty has confer'd on me, I wou'd not marry her,—— and if you require an Oath, am ready to give you Satisfaction by the deepest and most solemn one you can propose to me. This Evasion serv'd his turn: the old Gentleman, far from suspecting that being already married, there was no need of repeating the Ceremony again, believed all he said; but being naturally virtuous, commanded him to be less assiduous in his Visits, on the account he at first mention'd to him. *Bell-court* promised to obey, and the Discourse broke off, to the Satisfaction of both Parties. The Uncle thought for certain his favourite Nephew wou'd not bestow the large Estate he gave him, on a Woman, who for many Reasons he did not approve; and the Nephew was joyful that he had so fortunately impos'd on the Belief of a Person, from whom it was so much his business to conceal the Truth. A little it troubled him to refrain Visiting her so often as he had done, but he comforted himself with the thoughts of repairing all in private.

For

For about two Years had he become a Husband, in which time two lovely Boys were the product of his, and the reciprocal Affections of the fair *Climene* ; yet with so much Caution was the Affair carry'd on, that the Uncle of *Bellcourt* was entirely ignorant of all that pass'd ; this extraordinary Secrecy, 'tis probable, was owing to the Prudence and Cunning of *Climene's* Mother : but she dying soon after the Birth of the second Child, 'tis very much to be question'd if the young People wou'd have manag'd so well, had any very great Trials happen'd to call them to the Proof. *Bellcourt* was perfectly embarrass'd, and at a loss how to behave, when his Uncle one day propos'd Marriage to him with the Daughter of a rich Merchant, call'd *Julia* ; she was young, witty, beautiful, virtuous and wealthy ; and what Excuse to make for not addressing her in the manner he was commanded to do, he knew not : he therefore had recourse only to those common Answers which Men ordinarily give when they want Inclination to the Woman ; such as, he was too young to marry, that he despair'd of being approv'd by a Lady of her Deserts——that she wou'd turn his Pretensions into Ridicule ; and the like. Which Speeches his Uncle taking rather for the Effects of Bashfulness, than
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any other thing, repeated his Commands in so absolute a manner, that the perplex'd *Bellcourt* thought it best to seem to comply with them for that time, hoping that hereafter he might be able to find some Excuse which might serve his Purpose.

Never Man past a Night in greater Inquietudes than he did the ensuing one; he fell into the most bitter Complaints on the Severity of his Fortune, which threaten'd him either way with Ruin, if he attempted to forsake *Climene*, and deny his Marriage: there were Witnesses to prove, and he cou'd not believe any Woman of so tame and gentle a Nature, as to bear an Injury of that kind, without asserting her Right. If he wou'd therefore have been so guilty, it wou'd avail him nothing. But to be so, alas! was the least of his Desires; his faithful and disinterested Heart trembled more for the Evils she must partake, than those he was to feel himself; if the Secret was discover'd, he shou'd be depriv'd of all his Uncle's Favour had promis'd him the possession of.

But an Accident happen'd which put an end to all his Fears at once; his Uncle being abroad one Evening, somewhat later than usual, the Dews, which in most parts of *Spain* are very pernicious, gave him a violent Cold; which throwing him into a
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Fever, took him from the World in a few days. Before his Death he bequeath'd his whole Estate to his Nephew, charging him with almost his last Breath to marry *Julia*, with whose Father he told him he had already settled every thing relating to Settlements and Jointure ; and as he obey'd this Injunction, wish'd him Prosperity. There was nothing commanded by so near and dear a Relation, that *Bellcourt* wou'd not have readily obey'd, if in his power to have done it ; but as this was not, he hoped the Sin of Ingratitude wou'd not be imputed to him.

Having perform'd his funeral Obsequies, in a manner suitable to the Estate he left behind him, and the due Respect of one so much oblig'd, he declar'd his Marriage with *Climene*, and brought her with her two Sisters to his House. The News of this was very surprizing to the whole Town ; but as he had never made Declarations of Love to any other Woman, tho' wonder'd at by all, he cou'd with Justice be condemn'd by none : The Father of *Julia* appear'd infinitely concern'd that he cou'd not have him for a Son ; but when he heard that he was the Husband of *Climene*, before his Daughter was propos'd to him, was far from resenting his Behaviour, as knowing he had done, in concealing

cealing his Marriage during his Uncle's Life, no more than was consistent with Prudence.

For some time never did *Hymen* smile on a happier Pair than these; their Days pass'd on in the most perfect Tranquillity, and their Nights were all Extasy and mutual Transport: but where is the Felicity that one can promise one's self shall never know an End? How in a moment are frequently our best Pleasures chang'd into racking Pains; our sweetest Contentment into bitter Anguish, and our whole State transform'd from what it was?

Don *Octavio*, a young *Spaniard*, with whom our Sir *William* was extremely intimate, came to him one day, and after a long Preamble by way of Apology, for the Trouble he was about to give him, entreated a Proof of his Friendship in an Affair in which he said he knew no other Person he durst trust. He then told him, that having been long in love with a Lady, from whom he had receiv'd the greatest Encouragement imaginable, he had found himself on the sudden slighted without the least Cause given for it. That he had often begg'd to be inform'd what had induc'd her to a Cruelty so vastly different from her Behaviour; but she still refus'd him Satisfaction. And that her Maid had
secretly

secretly let him know, it was only the effect of Caprice; that her Mistress was the greatest Coquette in Nature; had serv'd several who pretended to her in the same manner; and that her greatest Pleasure was to disappoint and laugh at all Mankind. But, *said Octavio*, it is not with me, as perhaps it was with other Men, who call'd themselves her Adorers; I am in reality such, I love too deeply to be able to live without her; and if the Stratagem I have now taken in hand succeeds not, I have no more to do but die.

Sir *William*, who, I have already taken notice, was of the most sweet and commiserating Disposition imaginable, cou'd not hear this without resolving to assist him to the utmost of his power: He bid him speak boldly what it was he wou'd have him do, and vow'd to scruple nothing that was not dishonourable, to make him happy. Then thus have I contriv'd, *reply'd Octavio*; Her Maid pitying my Distress, and believing also her Mistress cannot be more happy than my Love will make her, gives her this Night a sleeping Draught, and will admit me and any Friend I shall confide in, at Midnight into her Chamber, whence we are to convey her to a House I have provided about a Mile distant from the House in which she lives — You see, *continu'd he*, I have no dishonourable Intentions;

tentions ; if so, I might compleat them on the sleeping and defenceless Maid, nor stand in need of the assistance of any other Person : but as my Aims are just and consistent with the strictest Rules of Modesty, I doubt not of your contributing to their Success. When in my power, she will perhaps not dare refuse to bless a Passion by noble Means, lest I shou'd be compell'd by my Despair to gratify it by others less to her advantage. I wou'd not have a Servant privy to it, nor can I depend on the Courage or Fidelity of any of those ; I have enough to assure myself they wou'd not flinch in danger, in case we shou'd meet with any Interruption as we are bearing her off. His Reasons and Designs appear'd so just to *Bellcourt*, that he hesitated not a moment, if he shou'd accompany him in them ; he presently demanded the Hour and Place where they shou'd meet, to embark on this Enterprize ; which being appointed, they took leave. Sir *William* order'd one of his best Horses to be ready saddled against he call'd for it ; and tho' his belov'd *Climene* hearing him give that Command, and withal that he shou'd not return home till the next day at soonest, was very impatient to know the Journey he was about to take ; yet so faithful was he to his Friend, as not to entrust

entrust even this dear Partner of his Bed with a Secret which was not his own.

About six a-clock in the Evening he took horse, and meeting Don *Ostavio* at the appointed Rendezvous, they rode together to the House where the fair Lady was to be carried; which they reach'd about eight, it not being above ten Miles distant from *Cadiz*. They stay'd and refresh'd themselves 'till the Hour arriv'd of going on the Execution of their Plot, then remounted and rode on 'till they came to the back Gate of a very stately House. *Ostavio* gave a Signal, and it was immediately open'd; he went in, and Sir *William* waited his coming out, which he presently did with a Lady in his Arms; and as if not incumber'd with his fair Burthen, leaped with a wonderful agility on his Horse, crying to his Companion, Now, now, Sir *William*, let us make use of our best speed, I am in possession of the lovely Prize, and will not part with it, but with my Life. They had the good fortune to meet no Person in their way, and in less than ten Minutes reached the House, and were secure from any fear of interruption.

Don *Ostavio* laid the charming Sleeper on a Bed, having been told by her Maid that it wou'd be many Hours before the Draught she had taken wou'd permit her
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to wake. But never had *Bellcourt* felt a greater Surprise than at the sight of this Lady ; there was something so exquisitely charming in her Face, tho' her Eyes were shut, that he cou'd not help gazing on her without a mixture of Delight, and Pain, and Admiration.—— He no longer wonder'd at *Octavio's* Passion, and tho' his Heart had never known what 'twas to stray from the Object of his first Love *Climene*, yet did he now feel strange Emotions, and in secret wish'd there was a Possibility of being belov'd by this new Beauty. He had, however, Presence enough of Mind to conceal his Thoughts from *Octavio* ; but when they left the Chamber, and the other endeavoured to divert the time by entertaining Conversation, and the best Wine, he cou'd not so far dissemble, but that the other observed he was extremely discontented at something, and took the freedom to enquire what had caused so sudden an alteration in his Humour. *Bellcourt* started at the Question ; but immediately recover'd himself, enough to reply in this manner : I fear, *said he*, the repetition of my Sentiments may not be altogether obliging to you, when I confess to you that were the Action of this Night unaccomplish'd, I shou'd scruple to be assisting in it ;—— wholly sway'd by my Friendship
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to you, and Compassion of your unhappy Passion ; I forgot the injustice I might perhaps be guilty of to others. — This Lady may have Parents, whose Grief for losing her may be fatal to them, — they may have contracted her elsewhere, — her own Affections may be engaged, — a thousand Possibilities occur to my Remembrance, that may render what we have done a Crime of the worst nature. I can easily remove all such Scruples, *said Octavio smiling*, and had you mentioned them before, I am confident my Answers wou'd but have more confirm'd your Will to serve me. Long an Admirer of this Lady's Charms, I solicited her Father ; he heard my Suit with pleasure, recommended me to his Daughter, she received me, as I have already told you, as a Man whom Love and Duty obliged her to marry : — I every day expected when that happy one shou'd arrive, which was to make her mine, when all on a sudden she refus'd to see me, or give me any Reasons for her change of Humour. I complain'd of it to her Father, who told me he had done all he cou'd to prevail on her ; but he found she was averse, and wou'd not force her Inclination : — Judge how ill I have been treated ? Cou'd I have thrown off all Love for so ungrateful a Family, I wou'd have done it ; but the Charms

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of *Julia* prevail above her Faults.— I cannot endure Life but in the Hope of enjoying her, and will now obtain my Wish. Not by force, I hope, cry'd Bellcourt; but I beseech you tell me, continu'd he, *strangely disorder'd at the Name of Julia*, what is the Family of this Charmer! who is her Father? You must needs have heard of him; reply'd the other, your Uncle was his Intimate, he is a Merchant at *Cadiz*, his Name *Voluni*. These Words were ready to make *Bellcourt* sink; he was now assur'd this charming Creature was the *Julia* he had been press'd by his Uncle with so much earnestness to marry; and to reflect that he had refused such a Blessing, was something more terrible than Death: to think also that he had been conducive to a Rival's Happiness, who was determin'd this very Night to rifle all her Sweets, and riot in Joys all boundless, and without a Name, was such a surcharge of racking Agony, as scarcely had he Strength to bear, much less to conceal. Distraction! cry'd he to himself, but that Moment recollecting that he was already married, and consequently cou'd entertain no Hope that *Julia* had encouraged the Addresses of *Octavio*, and that he had promised him all Friendship in this Affair, he grew ashamed of his own Wishes; and after walking three or four Turns backward

backward and forward in the Room, he at last sat down again something more compos'd; but how long he wou'd have continu'd so, is uncertain, for an old Woman who was left in the Chamber with *Julia*, to attend her waking, came running hastily to acquaint them that she was risen from the Bed, and appeared in such Distraction at finding herself in a Place to which she was altogether a Stranger, that she was afraid she wou'd throw herself out of the Window. *Octavio*, on that Intelligence, ran immediately up stairs, and *Bellcourt* again agitated by the most violent Emotions, was not long after him; he found the Door shut, and wou'd not knock at it, but stood listning however, in what manner *Octavio* wou'd behave, resolving if he attempted any Violence, to rush in to her Relief; but he heard him pursue the Discourse he had begun in these Terms: Why, Madam, *said he*, since so much the Object of your Aversion, did you encourage my Passion? Why permit me to speak of it to your Father? In the infancy of Desire, I might perhaps have conquer'd it; but you by Smiles, and Words all soft and charming, cherish'd its growth, 'till it arriv'd at a gigantick size, is now my Master, and will not be controul'd. That I forbade not your Addresses, *answer'd she*, at the first offer
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of them was, that my young and unexperienc'd Heart then knew not what it was to love!—— I had no Idea of the Passion, — nor imagin'd it was more than a Chimæra! —— I knew your Family, your Worth, and as I had no Tenderneſs, ſo felt no Averſion in particular, either for you, or any other Man: —— You asked my leave to addreſs my Father, which I granted, as having no Inclinations but what were his.——He approv'd of your Pretenſions; — I receiv'd you with more favour: —— But alas! I was too ſoon convinced I had been in an Error; I ſaw a Form which in one moment taught me more of Love than ever I was able to learn from you:—— Sighs, Tears, reſtleſs Nights, unquiet Days, vain Hopes, ſoft Languiſhments, and every Symptom of the fatal Gueſt appear'd upon me.—No other Name but his had Muſick for my Ears, no other Form delighted my Eyes, and but to think of Love from any other, was a ſhock I cou'd not bear. —— With Tears I entreated my Father not to command me to be yours, aſtoniſh'd him with the ſudden Earneſtneſs with which I begg'd that I no more might ſee you. His Indulgence conſented to my Suit, provided I wou'd let him know who 'twas for whom I wiſh'd to be preserv'd; though nothing was more terrible than to confeſs

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my Love ! yet to retrieve my Freedom, I broke through all Shame, and own'd my secret Flame : ——— It happen'd to be for one he was extremely pleas'd with, and instead of checking, encouraged my Passion, and told me he shou'd shortly be my Husband. ——— In pursuance to this Promise, all things were agreed on between him and the Relations of my Charmer ; but oh ! when he himself was consult'd about it, he refus'd me — he had before dispos'd his Heart, and I soon found myself the most miserable of my Sex. ——— The Grief I conceiv'd at this Disappointment was near putting an end to my Life ; and to alleviate my Melancholy, I was sent to my Aunt's, where you had the Opportunity of seizing me ; ——— I hope for no ill end, since sure my Story might excite Compassion in the hardest Heart ! ——— Believe, *Octavio*, I am sufficiently punish'd for my involuntary Deceit to you, — and that I suffer, and must for ever suffer whatever a hopeless and despairing Love can inflict.

What answer *Octavio* made to her Discourse, is little to the purpose to relate ; the Reader will easily suppose it was such as the Circumstance of the Affair requir'd, and such as Lovers wou'd ordinarily make use on, on the like Occasion : but whatever it were, *Bellcourt* was not in a condition

tion to hear it: *Julia's* Discourse had put him almost beside himself, between excess of Joy, and excess of Remorse. He was perfectly convinced by what she said, that it was only for him she had known that tender Passion which she so feelingly described; that she still lov'd him, and that it was because she cou'd look on no other Man without Aversion, that she continued in a Virgin State, and the thoughts of having rendered himself incapable of returning her Affection, or rather I shou'd say of giving her any Proofs how much he did in reality return it, was ready to make him die with Grief.— Yet was he so much transported at the Discovery of her Passion, that not all the Misfortunes it brought upon her were capable of making him with she lov'd him less.—He retir'd two or three Paces to a Window which was on the Stair-Case, and looking out, indulg'd Reflection on the oddness of this Adventure, for a considerable time.—Nor, perhaps, had not so soon come out of his Resvery, had not the Voice of *Julia*, in dreadful Shrieks, reach'd his Ears. It seems, *Octavio* having said every thing he was capable of, to persuade her to marry him, and finding his Endeavours ineffectual, was attempting to gratify his Passion by other less warrantable Means than yet he had made use of. Sir *William* im-

mediately guessed the truth, and instigated at once by Love, by Gratitude, and Jealousy, flew to the Door, and burst it open in a Moment; which he had no sooner done than he beheld the charming *Julia* almost naked, having been taken from her Aunt's with no other covering than one Petticoat, and a loose Night-Gown thrown carelessly about her, by her Maid, for decency sake, struggling, and almost dying with her fears, enclos'd within the Arms of the resolute *Ottavio*. Ha! *Bellcourt*, cry'd he, *looking furiously at him, when he saw who it was had given him this interruption*, was this well done? — Is this the Friendship you have vow'd? I scorn all thoughts of Friendship with a Villain, *reply'd Bellcourt*; nor did I ever vow to abet or countenance a dishonourable Action. I am alone the Judge of what I do, *resum'd the other*, but as I wou'd preserve the former Amity between us, I will hereafter satisfy you that I am guilty of no Injustice. — Therefore retire, and for the present enquire no farther. Put off your Slaves, *answer'd Bellcourt*, with Words like these: I am a Gentleman, and by the bloody Hand which blazons my Escutcheon, am bound to redress Injuries, and relieve the Oppress'd; nor will depart this Place, nor leave the Lady, 'till I have seen her safe restored to those lamenting Friends

Friends from whom your treacherous Wiles
have basely drawn her. Pleasant indeed,
cry'd Octavio, this from thee, the Partner
of the Guilt thou woud'st accuse me of!
Yes, to my shame, *resum'd Bellcourt*, I do
confess, that won to pity by thy moving
Tale of Love, and Honour, and Despair;
I gave my Assistance to reduce a vain Co-
quette to Reason, and her first Vows; but
then I knew not it was *Julia* you meant,
or the Daughter of the worthy *Voluni*, one
who refus'd thee not through the mutabi-
lity of her changing Nature, but because
she saw in thee nothing to love.——Nor
didst thou say thou meant'st a Rape, but
honourable Marriage. Though thy oppro-
brious Language deserves no Answer but
Contempt, *said Octavio*, yet I once more
calmly aver I told thee nought but Truth.
——Marriage I have offer'd, but 'tis re-
fus'd. And ever will by me, *cry'd Julia*,
by this time a little recover'd from the Surprise
the sight of Bellcourt had involv'd her in; I
never lov'd, but now despise and hate thee.
——Oh! therefore, *Bellcourt, continued*
she, turning to him, I conjure you by your
own Honour, and by that Friendship your
Uncle had for our Family, that you will
not recall the Promise you lately made, not
to quit me 'till you had seen me safe. ——
To your Protection I commit myself.——

Forfake me not, as you wish not to be forsaken by your Guardian Angel. Sooner will I forego my Life than you while thus distress'd, *reply'd Bellcourt, with a Look which denoted as much Tenderneſs as Reſpect.* Nay, then 'tis time to throw off all Regards of Friendſhip : Draw, *cry'd Octavio,* or tamely fall, to teſtify your Zeal, a Martyr. That wou'd be indeed to leave the Lady a Victim to your lawleſs Flame, *rejoin'd Bellcourt,* but thus I hope to ſhield her from the Danger. With theſe Words he put himſelf in a Poſture of Defence, but the other ran ſo furiously at him, that he cou'd not avoid receiving a ſmall Wound in the Breſt ; but in return, gave his Enemy one in the Right-hand, which diſabling him to hold his Sword, he was compell'd to reſign it, and with it the Lady, whom *Bellcourt* took by the trembling Hand, and led down ſtairs : he wou'd have left her in a Parlour while he went to get his Horſe, but ſhe wou'd needs accompany him to the Stable, fearing ſome farther Inſult might be offered her when left without a Guard in that Houſe, which ſhe perceived was inhabited only by two or three old Women, who were wholly at *Octavio's* devotion.

While he was preparing himſelf to go, and all the time of their little Journey, ſhe

she repeated her Acknowledgments of the Service he had done her; while he, all the time full of perplexed and troubled Meditations, return'd but short and confused Answers; till being come almost to the Gate of the House she was to enter, You over-rate, Madam, *said he*, the little I have done; nor can I think, to redeem you from a Danger to which I contributed to bring you, deserves any more than Pardon for the Fault I unwarily committed.

— But, Madam! *continued he*, the Rashness of my Temper has been more fatal to myself, than it can be to any other Person. — 'Tis an Error which has made me the most wretched of Mankind. — Heaven once design'd to make me master of a Treasure beyond what even its own extensive Power can equal; but ignorant of the Value, and all uncurious of Enquiry, I rejected the Bounty; and now by a second Fault, of the same inadvertent inconsiderate kind, am brought to know, when 'tis too late, what 'tis I have refused. *Julia* blush'd excessively at these words, knowing the meaning of them but too well; and being at a loss in what manner to reply, which would not wrong her Modesty, or the Obligations she had to him, hung down her Head in a thoughtful posture; which giving him an opportunity of contemplating

her the more,—Good God! said he, in a low Voice, tho' loud enough for her to hear, why did I ever see *Julia*, since I saw her not before it was too late to tell her I adore her! — How truly curs'd is my Condition, to know I am undone, but by my own Fault. — Nor Scorn, nor Cruelty, nor any of those Ills which Lovers ordinarily fear, impeded my Felicity, but by myself, my wretched self alone, I am ruin'd. — Fate put the Blessing, I would die to gain, into my hands; and I, unknowing what it was, foolishly threw it away neglected.

By this time they were come to the Gate, where some of the Servants being standing, one came to take *Julia* off the Horse, another took care of it when *Bellcourt* was dismounted, and a third ran to acquaint their Lady, that her Niece was return'd. 'Twould have been pleasant enough, had any disinterested Person been present, to observe the Confusion of the Aunt between Surprise and Joy. — She knew her Niece had been stolen away in her Sleep, and to see her brought back by a Gentleman, she imagin'd the same who had taken her thence, was something prodigiously strange. It immediately struck into her head, that he had married her, and therefore dared now avow his Theft; but she liked his Appearance

pearance so well, that she could entertain no thoughts to his disadvantage, and question'd not but he would make an obliging and a worthy Husband.—I will not ask, *said she*, by what means you were ravish'd from us, or what motive has induc'd this Gentleman to restore you ; — that shall be the business of our future talk : I can only tell you for the present, that I rejoice to have you again, and make my Re-tributions accordingly to your kind Conductor. *Julia* presently guessing what her Thoughts were, immediately told her the whole Story : and at the same time entreated *Bellcourt* to stay there, while she prepared herself to go to *Cadiz*, telling him, that she desired nothing more than that he should receive from her Father those Acknowledgments the Favours she had received from him deserv'd ; to which end, she would add another Trouble to those her Misfortunes had induced her to give him, *viz.* that of accompanying her to *Cadiz*. To which *Bellcourt* answer'd, that being himself to return to that Place, he could look on the Offer she made of permitting him to wait on her no other than as the highest Obligation she could confer on him. *Julia* made no other reply to these words, than an obliging Smile, and left the Room ; but soon after return'd

dress'd and adorn'd with all the Illustrations that Beauty takes delight to wear. What became of the enamour'd *Bellcourt* at this sight ! He that was so much charm'd with her under all the Disadvantages he before had beheld her in, was now ready to fall prostrate on the ground, and adore so perfect, so divine a Creature.— Scarce could he contain his Transports in presence of the Aunt : But they had no sooner taken Coach, than he indulg'd them all. —He spoke the softest words that Love and Wit cou'd form ; and being accompanied with an unfeign'd Sincerity, they seem'd more endearing, especially to a Heart like her's, young, tender, and before wholly devoted to Graces of the charming Speaker. 'Tis not to be doubted but that she could not avoid being infinitely pleas'd to find him her Admirer ; yet did it shock her Virtue, to hear such passionate Declarations from a Man who had disposed his Hand and Vows to another Woman. She testified the sense she had of it, by entreating he would talk no more on that Subject ; and telling him, that it was now too late to entertain Sentiments like those he mention'd ; that he was now *Climene's*, and the Sound of Love from him to any other Woman, a Crime which neither Heaven nor she could pardon. Sir

William

William sigh'd bitterly at this Remonstrance; but finding it unanswerable, hung down his head in speechless Confusion. — *Julia* told him, there was nothing she would refuse, to demonstrate the Gratitude she had for his Service, and the Friendship she believ'd he merited; but it must be on this condition, that he would mention Love no more.

Nothing more enhances the Esteem of a Lover, than to find the Object of his Affections can command her Passions; and the Coldness with which she receiv'd his Declarations, join'd to the knowledge how dear he was to her secret Wishes, made him regard her as the Wonder of her Sex; and being far from a thought of endeavouring to corrupt an Innocence so unspotted, he spared no Protestations to assure her of it; entreating only that she wou'd vouchsafe to let him see her sometimes. Without her Conversation, *he said*, it was impossible for him to sustain the Load of Life; and as he aim'd at no more than a *Platonick* Friendship, she might in pity grant him that, without prejudice to the nicest Rules of Virtue. It would have been difficult, indeed, to have refused him this: she readily comply'd, and he, in return again, vow'd never by any Word or
Action,

Action, to give her cause of repenting that Condescension.

At their arrival at *Cadiz*, they were received with some Surprise by *Voluni*; but scarce is it possible to represent his Astonishment, when the History of what happen'd to his Daughter, was at the full related to him. He would have gone that moment to the Governour, and complain'd of *Octavio's* Proceeding; but *Bellcourt* dissuaded him, being too generous to wish the ruin of a Man who had trusted him, though his Rival, and less worthy of his Friendship than he had believed.

After having prevail'd thus far on *Voluni*, and receiv'd his thanks for the timely relief his Arm had brought to *Julia*, he took his leave, and return'd home: But how strangely was he amazed, when he found the News of all that was done had reach'd *Climene* before his arrival! *Octavio* had been with her, and inform'd her of every Particular of the Adventure: adding also a great Truth, but which, at that time, he was not certain of; that *Bellcourt* was fallen most passionately in love with *Julia*; and that it was more owing to the new Desire her Beauty had inspir'd, than any Principle of Honour, which had induced him to act contrary to the Friendship he had promis'd. This put *Climene* into
the

the 'extremest Flame of raging Jealousy ; she flew on *Bellcourt* the moment he enter'd the Room with a thousand Reproaches. — She call'd him inconstant, perfidious, base, every Name ungovernable Passion could invent ; but concealing from whom she had the Intelligence.——He was at the greatest loss imaginable, to find out by what means she came at the knowledge of what had happen'd. He denied, however, no part of the Truth, but that he was in love with *Julia* ; and endeavour'd to convince her she had no reason for distrust, by all the gentle ways he could make use of ; but those not succeeding, and that Tendernefs which had made him hitherto forgive all the little Foibles of her Humour, being erased by a superior Passion, he left off speaking, and appear'd wholly unconcern'd either at her Grief or Anger. —— This put her beyond all patience, and she grew more like a Fury than a Woman ; which Behaviour heightning his Disgust, the Indifference which his Passion for *Julia* had occasion'd, became at last an Aversion.——He hated to be near her, took all opportunities of avoiding her Company ; and when with her, either kept a sullen Silence, or spoke such things as were far from mitigating her Resentment.——She, on the other hand, who had married him
more

more out of a Principle of Interest than Love, perceiving she no longer maintain'd her former Power over him, thought of nothing but revenging the Indignity he put upon her Beauty.

Octavio, tho' far from being cured of his Passion for *Julia*, in revenge of the disappointment of his Hopes, laid close siege to the Virtue of *Climene* ; which he had the better opportunity of doing, because *Bellcourt* was almost perpetually at the House of *Voluni*. In fine, he was here more successful in his Attempts: He won the fair *Climene*, partly through Revenge on her Husband, and partly thro' Inclination to this new Adorer, to yield to his Desires.——But as his Aim in enjoying her, was more to gratify his Spleen against her Husband, than any great Passion for herself, he took no care to conceal the Amour: It soon became the publick Chat; and Sir *William* himself, at length, was not unacquainted with it.——Tho' he no longer lov'd *Climene*, she was his Wife, the Mother of his Children, and her Honour being his, he thought he shou'd be render'd contemptible not to revenge an Injury of this nature: he therefore deliberated not long; and having received the certainty of her Shame from too many hands not to give credit to it, he sent to

Octavio

Octavio a little Billet, with the following words :

To Don OCTAVIO.

AN Injury of the kind you have done me, is not to be repair'd but by the Sword ; prepare yourself, therefore, to meet me in St. Iago's Close, to-morrow about five in the Morning ; or expect to be as notorious for your Cowardice, as you are for the base Actions you have been guilty of to

BELLCOURT.

Octavio fail'd not to answer this as became a Man who had Courage enough to defend whatever he dar'd to act ; and the appointed Hour being arriv'd, they met. — *Bellcourt* accus'd him of having seduced his Wife from her Duty and her Honour ; which the other was so far from denying, that he seem'd to triumph in it, and, with an insulting Air, throwing him a Letter, Yes, said he, I have in part recompenc'd myself for the loss of *Julia* ; and that you may not think I boast of imaginary Favours, read that, and be convinc'd all Women are not so unkind as *Julia*. Sir *William* was too much transported to contain himself any longer, but drawing his Sword, obli-

obliged the other to do the same.—They fought some time without any Advantage on either side ; but, in the end, Fortune favour'd the just Cause, and *Octavio* fell, oppress'd with many Wounds. *Bellcourt* had too much Honour to insult him ; but taking up the Paper, which had all this time lain on the Ground, put it into his Pocket, and making all the haste he could into the City, sent to the Friends of *Octavio*, that care might be taken of him, in case he were in a condition to receive any benefit by it. Having done this, he attempted not to escape, believing that if *Octavio* should die of his Wounds, the greatness of the Provocation to give them, would be a sufficient Plea for his Pardon. It being immediately know what had happen'd, he was, however, seized and carried away to Prison, where he had time to peruse the Letter given him by *Octavio* ; the Contents whereof he found were as follows :

To the Charming *OCTAVIO*.

HOW unjust are you, my Angel, to accuse me of having yielded to your Will more out of Revenge to my Husband, than Tenderness for you.—'Tis true, indeed, I hate and despise the Wretch ; but, Oh ! my Aver-
sion

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sion and Contempt, are infinitely short of my Fondness for the most lovely of his Sex.——
Were Bellcourt as endearing still as on his Bridal-Night, by all my Hopes of Happiness, by thee, my Soul's best Joy, I would forsake his longing Arms, and fly to thine; there feast on Pleasures not to be described, nor known but in thy Love.—— Fail not to come this Night; my Heart's on fire to meet thee, and I could half forgive the Neglect my Husband treats me with, since it gives me so many Opportunities of being bless'd with a Man so infinitely above him in every thing that can charm the dear Octavio's

Most passionately Devoted,

And ever Faithful

CLIMENE.

Whoever is a Husband, may easily conceive the Shock a Letter such as this must give Bellcourt. There is something in the Tye of Marriage, which, besides, the Disgrace that ensues, the Breach of it makes the Persons so united, unable to endure the Partner in it should be guilty of a fault this way. To see this Testimony of her Guilt under her own Hand, was more alarming than all he had known of it before;

fore ; he was half distracted, even *Julia* for some moments was forgot, and nothing cou'd be consider'd but the Inconstancy of an unfaithful Wife.

But in the midst of these Afflictions arriv'd a Consolation, a Friend whom he had employ'd to enquire concerning the State of *Octavio's* Wounds, came to inform him he had none that were either mortal, or very dangerous, and that Bail wou'd be permitted to relieve him from that sad Confinement. He had no sooner receiv'd this Intelligence, than he imparted the Contents of the Letter to his Friend, who advis'd him to lay it before the Canonical Judge immediately, and sue out a Divorce against the fair Apostate from her Vows. He did so the moment he was releas'd, and his Suit being heard with favour, he found it no difficulty to obtain what he now desir'd the most of any thing on Earth. In a very few Months he he was free from *Climene* and the Fears of *Octavio's* Death; but longing once more to resume those Chains he had so lately shaken off, he sollicitated *Voluni* for his charming Daughter : and by what has been said concerning his Inclinations, and the fair Lady's Passion for that Alliance ; 'tis easy to believe was not long before he accomplish'd his Wishes.

Nothing

Nothing cou'd be more splendid than the Celebration of these so much desir'd Nuptials. Sir *William*, besides the immense Happiness he thought it, of being possess'd of such a Treasure in his Bride; had also the Satisfaction of having perform'd the Commands of an Uncle, whose Memory was so precious to him; and the charming *Julia* having now the Reward of her constant Flame, bless'd the happy Moment she had entertain'd it, and made no scruple of declaring, that none but those who love are truly happy.

It now remains only to relate, that *Octavio* repining at their Felicities, and unable to endure the sight of it, embark'd in the first Ship for *Constantinople*, hoping by the sight of the many Curiosities of that Place, to divert a Passion which he had lost all Hopes of gratifying. *Climene* wou'd have accompanied him, but he refus'd her with Scorn and Derision; the Grief of which, together with the Shame which her Disgrace had brought upon her, made Life become a Burden; which to ease herself of, with all the Load of Infamy which hung upon it, she swallow'd Poison, and in her Death, truly repenting her ill Conduct, excited more Compassion, than the sight of the most poignant Miseries wou'd have done.

Let

Let this Example therefore encourage all who love with Honour, and know how to confine their Passions, to hope, that tho' they suffer for a time, a sure Reward will in the End succeed ; and if not here, in another World, they will be certain of receiving those Felicities their Virtues merit, and in the mean time know an innate Contentment, which in the Gratification of a lawless Flame is inevitably destroy'd.



Love



Love Pos'd ;

O R,

The Triple Contest.



Count *Valerno* was a Gentleman generally esteem'd for many excellent Qualifications, both of Mind and Body ; nor was he look'd upon to be less happy than he deserv'd to be : He was possess'd of a large Estate, had married a young Lady of Beauty and Fortune ; they liv'd together in a perfect Amity, and to add to their Contentment, and to make the Time pass on with more Delight, Donna *Althea* and *Isabella* chose never to be separated from them till Death or Marriage left them not the

the Power of remaining any longer with them. The former of these Ladies was a Widow, and Sister to Madam de *Valerno*, a Woman very lovely in her Person, of a Humour extremely Gay and Entertaining, but a little inclin'd to Coquetry, and had a Wit and Invention which it was not safe to provoke : The other was extremely good-natur'd, affable and obliging, and if she had not so many Charms in her Person and Conversation as the fair Widow ; she was not, however, without her Attractions ; and had her Charms been in themselves less powerful, they were yet unrivall'd ; and a Virgin was never yet without the Means of exciting Desire. But tho' neither of these Ladies were without a Croud of Admirers, Love seem'd little the Business of their Thoughts ; nor had any Man the power to engross their Hours enough, to make them neglect any Opportunity of obliging their Friends. In fine, the *Count's* House appear'd a Scene of uninterrupted Tranquillity and Joy — the meager Face of Care durst not peep in, to intrude on a Felicity so innocent and fix'd ; there were no Jealousies, no Distrusts, no secret Discontents ; but every one behaving to the others with an unfeign'd Sincerity, and that Respect which the Nearness

ness of Blood or Alliance demanded; none either did, or had reason to suspect the want of it.

In this agreeable Concord did they pass their Time; when the *Count* receiv'd a Letter from *Don Cardenio de Esperole*, a young Gentleman of great Birth; but of a decay'd Fortune, through the Mismanagement of his Ancestors, and which he himself had taken no pains to retrieve. He was a distant Relation of the *Count's*; they had been extremely intimate in their younger Years, had studied the Sciences at the same University; but the natural Gaiety, and Love of Novelty in *Don Cardenio's* Disposition, inclining him to travel, he threw away his Books, and betook himself to the Compass: He had spent more than eight Years in Travelling, in which time he had seen most Courts of *Europe*, and was now return'd, bringing with him whatever appear'd pleasing to him, or he thought might be so to others from every different Part he had been in: He had all the Complaisance and soft Address of the *Italian*; the Vivacity and ready Turn of Conversation, so much admir'd in the *French*; and the Generosity and Openness of Behaviour, for which the *English* are remarkable above all other

other Nations. Never was any one more improv'd by Travelling, nor did Nature ever endow a Man with a greater Capacity of Improvement. To render his Accomplishments yet more conspicuous, he had every thing in his Form that can excite Regard or Tendernefs ; his Eyes, which were of the finest Blue imaginable, had in them a certain Languishment which immediately found the way to the Heart ; inspiring that in others, he but seem'd to be full of himself——his Mouth was admirably proportion'd, and whenever he spoke or smiled, ten thousand nameless Graces circled his Lips, and seem'd to dance to the harmonious Accents of his Words——The most blooming Virgin might envy the Delicacy of his Complexion, especially when warm Desires tinctur'd his Cheeks with Love's delightful Hue, a rosy Red——his Hair was of that agreeable Colour which the Sun wears, when half obscur'd, he shines through a Veil of intervening Clouds, the sweetest brown in the World, neither too fair nor dark——nothing cou'd be more regular than all his Features——more exact than his Shape——and to crown all these Perfections, an Air and Mien so enchanting, that no Mortal cou'd resist the Pleasure it
afforded

afforded to gaze on him. I describe the Beauties of this lovely Youth more particularly, because the Effects of them are the whole Business of the following Pages. One wou'd think by what I have said of him, which yet is short of the Truth, that he was too dangerous a Guest to be invited by a Husband; yet so dear was he to *Count de Valerno*, that he no sooner heard he was arriv'd at *Madrid*, than he sent to entreat he wou'd favour him with his Company at *Salamanca*, which was the Place he resided at. *Don Cardenio* was of too affable a Temper, nor had so far forgot his former Friendship, to neglect so obliging a Summons: he came with all possible Expedition; and the *Count*, who abhorr'd the Formalities, and too nice Jealousies of his Country, and besides had a perfect Confidence in *Cardenio*, soon presented him to the Ladies, and assur'd him, that he desir'd nothing more than an entire Freedom while they continu'd together. The young Don said a thousand fine things in commendation of the Countries he had pass'd thro', which allow'd the Women in all decent Liberties; telling him, and perhaps with a great deal of Truth, that that Sex take the less, the more is permitted them: His Notions, or at least his agreeable Manner

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of

of expressing them, render'd him very pleasing to the *Count*; and if this amiable Society were, before the arrival of this Stranger, extremely entertaining to each other, they now appear'd infinitely more so, his Wit and Good-Humour inspiring a double share of Gaiety and Spirit among them.

For about a Week had he been there, Dancing, Feasting, and passing the Time in every Amusement that the *Count* thought might be acceptable to one so much addicted to Pleasure as he knew *Cardenio* to be; and having taken notice, or at least imagin'd he had done so, that his dear Guest seem'd pretty much affected with the Charms of *Donna Isabella*; he said to him one day in Merriment, that he believ'd he must make a Match between them. The young Lady blush'd, but more from Modesty than Reluctance at the Proposal; but *Cardenio* answer'd with a great deal of Gallantry, That the Happiness he enjoy'd in a married State, was enough to persuade all the World to enter into it; and for my part, *added he*, (bowing to *Isabella*, but directing his Eyes to the other two) I think all Beauty is compriz'd in this Room; nor wou'd my Desires ever stray from it, might they find Acceptance
where

where I wish they shou'd. The *Count*, who observ'd not his Glances, took what he said as wholly directed to *Isabella*. Be of good Courage, *Don Cardenio*, said he, take my Word for it, my Cousin shall listen to your Suit——He was proceeding, but *Donna Althea* interrupting him with a gay Air, cry'd, Fye Brother, you are too particular in Company; the Gentleman made his Compliment in general, and I see no reason why I shou'd not ascribe some part of it to my own Charms. As the least share of it is justly mine, *answer'd Isabella*, 'twou'd be an Arrogance wou'd subject me to Ridicule, if I shou'd consider it as made wholly to me; but you forget, Madam, *pursued she*, (with a Voice that discover'd how much she was piqued) that by making yourself concern'd in this fine Speech, you lay yourself under an Obligation of returning it — And as you are much better qualify'd for such a Reply than I am, I gladly resign all my part of the Honour, provided you undertake the Difficulty. Very well, Ladies, *said Madam de Valerno*, I find you are resolv'd to seclude me; but as I am a Woman, in Company, and consequently may imagine myself as much oblig'd as either of you to a Gallantry which seem'd not particularly point-

ted, to end the Dispute between you, the *Count* shall answer for us all. That wou'd be to lay a Task on me, my Dear, *reply'd he*, which I know not how I shou'd acquit myself of handsomely.— The Man must have infinitely more Penetration than I can boast, who can account for the Dispositions of three several Women? Well then, *resum'd Madam*, we will leave it to Don *Cardenio's* own discernment, to inform him which of us has the most Gratitude. Alas! Madam, *answer'd he*, that is to lead me into a Self-deception, which may cost me dear; since nothing is so certain, as that Hope often flatters us with Expectations which have nothing in them of Reality; I might perhaps, wronging the tenderest Heart, bestow the Palm of Softness on the most cruel and inexorable.

In these kind of Discourses they pass some time, which tho' they seem'd to be spoke only in Raillery, had a greater Effect on the three Ladies than can be easily imagin'd: Every one of them took what he said as meant wholly to herself, and had their different Reflections on it. Madam *de Valerko*, 'till the Arrival of this dangerous Guest, the best Wife in the World, began now to think it a venial Transgression to transfer some part of her Affections

on

on so deserving a Man. Donna *Althea*, tho' accustomed to receive Addresses from all the Young and Gay, and had found the excitements of Desire for others besides her Husband, now knew there were Delicacies in Love which she had never experienced before; she cou'd not bear even that the *Count* shou'd jest with him concerning *Isabella*; and that young Beauty, no less devoted to him than her fair Friends, thought it impertinent in Donna *Althea* to interrupt the *Count* in his Proposal, whether it were made in earnest, or by way of Amusement. In fine, from this Conversation one may date the Period of their former Amity; they looked not on one another but with the Eyes of Jealousy, and 'twou'd have been pleasant enough for Madam *de Valerno*, had she been at leisure to have observed it, to see whenever they were Dressing, what pains each took to make the other appear ridiculous; Donna *Althea* wou'd alter the Ribbands on *Isabella's* Head, and *Isabella* wou'd needs new pleat the Robe of Donna *Althea*; they were always finding fault with one another's Mode, and taking pains to change it, not for a more becoming one, the Reader will easily imagine. They watched each other with so much diligence, that being always together, it

was impossible for *Don Cardenio* to have exchanged a word in private with either of them, if he had endeavour'd it; but his Inclinations were at present elsewhere engag'd: the Wife of his Friend, perhaps, because there appeared the greatest Difficulty in gaining her, had more Charms for him than either of those who were at liberty to dispose of themselves, cou'd boast. And the Jealousy of the others having yet reach'd only one another, gave him an Opportunity of declaring himself more fully than he cou'd have hoped. He had been abroad with the *Count* one day, visiting a Gentleman in the Neighbourhood, whence the other, having some Business, went elsewhere; on which *Cardenio* immediately took his leave, and returned home. The two Rival Ladies were gone to take the Air in his absence, not expecting him in a much longer time: *Madam de Valerno* was without any Company but her amorous Meditations, which cast so sweet a Languishment over all her Face, as very much enhanced her Charms, and gave a secret Encouragement to the Lover: He was in a little study in what manner he shou'd make known his Passion, when the Lady gave him a Handle, by accosting him in this manner: You are very grave, *Don Cardenio*,

Cardenio, said she, and since we are alone, permit me to guess the Cause: I am satisfy'd you have lost a Heart since you came to *Salamanca*, and as I flatter myself that I have interest enough either with my Sister or my Cousin, to forward your Desires; it wou'd certainly be for your advantage to acquaint me with them. But will you promise me, *Madam, reply'd he,* if I confess you are not deceiv'd in your Conjecture, to do all in your power to make the Charmer mine? Yes, *cry'd she, faintly, trembling with the Apprehension that he was about to name one of those she had mention'd.* But you must swear you will, *Madam, resum'd he;* for I am sensible many Scruples may be rais'd against me, nor dare I reveal the Name which has enslav'd me, 'till I have your Vow to refuse nothing which may contribute to my Happiness. What need an Oath from one so well inclin'd to serve you, *said she, peevishly,* (still alarm'd with the fear that she shou'd presently hear *Albea* or *Isabella* was his distinguish'd Care.) Forgive my Doubt, *pursued he;* you will judge it but too reasonable when you have heard me out: and in pity to a Heart which burns with unextinguish'd Love! vouchsafe your Promise.

———*Speak, Madam, continu'd he, my*

fearful Soul fluttering 'twixt Hope and Dread, waits at my Ears.— Oh ! swear, and give me ease ! The manner in which he spoke these Words, and the soft impatience that languish'd in his Eyes, which all the while were fix'd on hers, banish'd great part of the Anxiety she had been in, and half assur'd it was herself he meant, by the Difficulties he found in revealing it ; Well, then to satisfy you, *said she*, here I protest by all we ought to love or fear, by all my Hopes of Happiness here, or hereafter, to omit nothing which may bring soon to your Arms the Woman you adore. — Now boldly speak her Name, *continued she*, for when I break this Oath, may Heaven renounce me. By you commanded, Madam, *answer'd he*, looking on her with Eyes enflamed with tender Passion, by you absolv'd, and by your divine Promises raised from the last extremity of Despair, to Hope and Joy, I dare to tell you, my Heart 'till now averse to Love, disdain'd to yield to any Charms but yours. — *Valerno*, the heavenly *Valerno*, cou'd alone enthrall the Free-born Soul of *Esperole*. Me ! *Don Cardenio*, cry'd *she*, affecting a Surprise ; have you forgot, Sir, who I am ?

Oh

Oh! no, *resumed he, falling on his knees*; too well I know you are the Wife of him I call my Friend,——and to a Soul incapable of Love, and ignorant that that Passion takes a pride in conquering the greatest Difficulties, I must seem guilty of Deceit, Injustice, Inhospitallity, and a thousand other Crimes; and greatly, indeed, should I deserve the Blame I should incur, were Love less involuntary, or were you less charming. —— Your Beauties, O most divine *Valerno*! are not of the ordinary kind, nor are they ordinary Effects that must attend them.——Why then are you surprized at what, did you consider your own Power, you would know to be unavoidable. Well, *Don Cardenio, answer'd she*, if you could resolve to love with Honour, I should think it no breach of Duty to my Husband, to allow you the second Place in my Affections: But —— as she was speaking, she heard the Tread of some Persons in the next Room; 'Twill not be prudent, *pursued she*, to continue this Conversation here; but this Night the Count receives a vast deal of Company, I know you will be one among them: but if you can make any pretence to steal from them, you shall find me in the close Grotto, at the farther-end of the Garden.—— We

may talk there without danger of interruption.

The transported Lover had but just time to kiss her hand for the Condescension, before Donna *Althea* and *Isabella* came in. Unwelcome as they were to both, neither Madam *De Valerno*, nor *Cardenio*, were such ill Dissemblers, as not to keep the Chagrin they conceiv'd at their entrance from being taken notice of. They all fell into a gay Conversation, in which the Count soon after join'd them. They continued all together, till the Company Madam *De Valerno* had mention'd, being come, the two Gentlemen retired to another Room to entertain them, leaving the Ladies to themselves. Madam, who had many things in her head, went to her Chamber, that she might indulge her Humour with more privacy, and also have the better opportunity of going unobserv'd to the Grotto, where she had appointed to meet *Cardenio*. Donna *Althea*, and *Isabella*, who now were little desirous of each other's Society, but when they fear'd to be absent, believing *Cardenio* was secure for all this Night, they separated, and withdrew, one to one Room, and another to another. The Count had order'd a magnificent Collation for his Guests, and the cheer-

cheerful Glass went briskly round ; but not all the Engagements of Wit and Wine, could so far take up the Mind of Don *Cardenio*, as to make him forgetful of his Appointment with the charming Countess. He took the opportunity of her Husband's being warmly engaged in a Dispute with one of the Gentlemen, and stole unsuspected to the happy Rendezvous. The Charmer he expected was there before him, and they immediately enter'd into the softest and most endearing Conversation that Love, accompanied with good Sense, could dictate. *Cardenio* was for gaining the Point he came for ; and insisted on the Oath she had taken before the discovery of his Passion : She but faintly evaded it, and had, doubtless, in a very few moments, yielded him every thing his rapacious Wishes could have prompted him to take, if her Woman, who knew she was come into the Garden, tho' not her Design in doing so, had not run down the Walk hastily to acquaint her, that the Company being gone, her Lord enquir'd for her. At the first noise she made in coming, Don *Cardenio* had stood close in a corner of the Grotto, to avoid any suspicion of his being there ; and Madam *De Valerno* stepp'd out of it, and mov'd carelessly on, as wand'ring up
and

and down for pleasure.— At this intelligence, she was obliged to return to the House, cursing in her Mind the Interruption. *Cardenio*, who heard the Message, knew there was no farther Opportunity to be hoped that Night, and therefore forsook his Covert, and was retiring also, when *Donna Althea* met him, and accosting him with her accustom'd Gaiety, obliged him to turn back.— She happen'd to be at her Chamber-window, looking out, when he went into the Garden; the Moon shining clear, she easily distinguish'd a Form so dear to her; but being at that time half undress'd, as designing to go immediately to Bed, she could not follow him till she had put on her Night-gown, and some other Habiliments, which Decency would not permit her to be seen without, which was the reason that she saw not her Sister; and imagining it was *Isabella* he came thither to meet, You are a happy Man, *Don Cardenio*, said she, to have Virgins forsake their Bashfulness, to meet you in such an Hour and Place as this. — 'Tho' I am wholly ignorant what you mean, Madam, answer'd he, yet I confess my Condition is to be envied, who have so fine a Woman as *Donna Althea* so near me, and in so sweet a Solitude as this. 'Tis an inviting Night,

Night, *resumed she*, yet I cannot believe that all its Charms, without the Aid of some other more powerful ones, would have been able to have drawn *Cardenio* from such agreeable Company as he left for it. They drank too hard for me, *replied he*; and that, together with the Suggestions of my good Angel, made me quit that Company, in exchange for something too agreeable to be compared with that dull Pleasure Men enjoy in the Society of each other. I expected no less than such a Complement from one so much a Courtier as *Cardenio*, *answer'd she*; but I am so far from believing it sincere, that I assure you I know the Deficiencies of my own unthinking Sex so well, that except it is some particular Favourite among us, and even she, but at some times, is preferable to the Conversation you meet with among your own.— I grant you, Madam, *resumed he*, that the Company of all Women is not very agreeable; but they who would exclude them totally from the power of improving, must never have heard the amiable *Althea* speak; whose Wit is no less powerful than the unquestion'd Charms of her Eyes and Air. Eye, Don *Cardenio*, *said she*, you think you are talking to *Isabella*.—— No, by Heaven, *answer'd he*, if I were, I should be guilty

guilty of Sacrilege, in adorning her with Trophies, which of right belong only to the Divine *Althea*. Yet have you bestow'd at her Shrine, *said she*, a Trophy more estimable than all the fine things you are able to say to another ; and while she is in possession of your Heart, has little reason to envy the Complaisance you pay elsewhere.

I am not vain enough, Madam, *answer'd he*, to imagine any Lady interests herself so far in my Behaviour, as you seem to hint she does ; but if I am so fortunate to inspire such a Degree of Regard, I hope you have Discernment enough to be so just to mine, as to know the Blessing wou'd be doubled on me, were I thus favour'd by the Divine *Althea*. Pish, *cry'd she*, were any other Woman in my Place, you wou'd say just the same to her——But, *continu'd she*, indolently, since you are in the humour of Chatting, let us sit down beneath the Branches of yonder Sicamore : With all my Soul, Madam, *answer'd he* ; and led her towards the Place she pointed to. Now, *said she*, (as soon as they were seated) you must know I had a malicious Design in detaining you in the Garden ; I know to you Men of Wit and Gallantry, there cannot be so great a
Pu-

Punishment, as to be kept from showing it—but I here condemn you to the Pain of speaking nothing but Truth, on the forfeit of having all the fine things you say, immediately reported to *Isabella*, with Additions. Gladly I obey so pleasing an Injunction, *resumed he*; I had not been at *Salamanca* half an hour, before I languish'd for an Opportunity to tell the Divine *Althea* that I die for her——and as you command me to deal sincerely, I am sure I now do, when in this Posture, and thus employ'd, I think myself pretty near being the happiest of my Sex—In speaking these words, he threw one Arm about her Neck, and with the other Hand pushing her gently backwards, she fell so as not to be able to prevent him from acting what he pleas'd. He contented himself at first, however, with kissing her Lips, her Eyes and Breast, which by reason of her *Disshabillée* was easily expos'd. She made some faint Efforts to rise, but *Don Cardenio* was not so wholly devoted to the absent Charms of *Madam de Valerno* to feel nothing of his Sex about him, when alone with so lovely an Object as *Althea*——every Word, every Look, nay, her very Repulses convinced him he cou'd do nothing that she wou'd not forgive; and he resolv'd to make the
right

right use of the Opportunity she allow'd him. And proceeding by pretty swift Degrees to greater Freedoms, May I not hope, *cry'd he*, a Pardon? Away with your audacious Hopes, *reply'd she*, affecting to struggle; but in reality yielding to the boldest of his Pressures——You will not sure attempt further——I will not be treated thus——What is it you mean? To lose myself in Bliss, *said he*, to prove those Extacies which inflam'd our softest, best of Poets to leave behind him Volumes in the Praise of Love.——Oh what wou'd he have writ, had Charms like my *Althea's* inspir'd his Muse; or cou'd he have ador'd them like *Cardenio*! These Words were accompany'd with Actions more fit to be imagin'd than describ'd. I shall therefore only say, that he wanted so little of being Master of his Wishes, that a Moment longer and she had been without the Power of yielding any greater Favours; but Fortune, who was resolv'd to give him a second Disappointment, sent an Interruption before it was too late, to prevent him from being happy. A Voice, known by both of them to be *Donna Isabella's*, call'd out, *Althea*, *Donna Althea*, where are you? These Words several times repeated, and the Sound coming still nearer, made the

half-

half-blest Pair start from their unfinish'd Joy; and believing it an Impossibility to conceal their being together, *Cardenio* threw himself on the Grass, counterfeiting a sound Sleep, and *Althea* standing by, answer'd the Voice in this manner: Here I am, said *she*, dear *Isabella*, come hither and assist me to wake this Mortal, if the Sleep he is in be not that of Death. She had scarce finish'd these Words before *Isabella* came up to her; What is the matter, Madam? cry'd *she*, who have you got there? 'Tis Don *Cardenio*, reply'd *she*, fallen so fast asleep, that tho' I have been this quarter of an hour endeavouring to rouse him, I cannot oblige him so much as to open his Eyes, or cause the least Motion in him.— If you have fail'd, resum'd *Isabella*, (with an Air which testify'd she gave little Credit to what she said,) 'tis hardly in the power of my Unexperience to move him. Let us try, at least, cry'd the other, (feigning not to understand the Satyr she intended by these Words) do you take one Arm, and I the other, we will between us either wake or dislocate him. *Isabella*, well enough pleas'd at this Opportunity of touching him, did as she was bid; and both of them pulling with all their Strength, and at the same time, calling him by his Name,

Name, he pretended at last to start, and looking wildly about him, ask'd what they wanted, who they were, and where he was. He acted his part with so much Nature, that *Isabella* began to think he had been really asleep, and coming into a better humour than when she first found him and *Althea* together, join'd with that Lady to rally him on his Drouzinefs. He excus'd himself, that he had not slept well the Night before, and that he had drank more than his Constitution wou'd well bear ; they had some farther Discourse on this Subject, as they all three went together toward the House, and he having each Lady by one Hand, took this Opportunity of endeavouring to find out, whether what *Althea* had said of *Isabella's* Passion for him were true. He gave that young Maid the most tender Pressures as he led her, and when they came under the Covert of Trees, which hinder'd what he did from being seen by the other, he gently stole her Hand to his Mouth, and printed on it Kisses, which, artless as she was, she understood the meaning of. Once he put his Head on her Breast as they pass'd along, and the soft Tremblings and Unreluctance, with which she suffer'd him to declare himself in this dumb Language, made him
know

know he had as great an Interest in her Heart, as he had in both her fair Companions. At length they came into the House, and it being very late, the two Ladies took leave of him, going, as he imagin'd, to their Beds; *Althea* did so, but *Isabella*, who, by his Behaviour in the Garden, flatter'd herself with a belief, that he was as much her Lover as she desir'd he shou'd be; and long'd to hear that in Words, which she took his Actions for a Demonstration of, instead of going to her Chamber, slip'd into a little Room which she knew he must pass through to go to that in which he lay; she had not been there three Minutes before he enter'd, his own Servant attending with a Light. She made him the Compliment of the Night, wishing him a good Repose: 'Tis you, Madam, then must give it me, *said he*; were I assur'd that the lovely *Isabella* wou'd think of me in her Dreams, mine wou'd be all Felicity and Transport. How impossible is it for you, *resum'd she*, to answer even the most common Sentence without Flattery? That which directed to any other Woman, *reply'd he*, wou'd indeed be so, is infinitely sincere, when address'd to *Isabella*. So extensive are your Charms, so vast my Adoration of them, that all I can
say.

say, or that Language can find Words for, is short of what I feel——Believe me, Madam, never Man lov'd with that Passion as I do my charming *Isabella*, and pardon the Abruptness with which I declare myself; Opportunities, I know not why, are difficult to be met with in this House——even this happy Moment is beyond my Hopes.——Oh that you wou'd be so divinely Good to borrow a few Moments from your Sleep, and bless a dying Lover with the Means of telling you more fully how much his Heart, his Soul has been devoted to you from the first Moment he gaz'd upon your Charms. The Tenderness which languish'd in her Eyes, and that inexpressible Delight which wander'd o'er her Face, and which is the infallible Demonstrative of secret Love; all the time he was speaking, gave him encouragement to pursue his Request in these Terms. You must, my Angel, *cry'd he*, (seizing her Hand, and pressing it to his Heart) you must in pity of the Agonies which tremble here, grant me the Joy of entertaining you this Night with the Story of my Passion——Heaven knows when I may be favour'd with an Occasion such as this again——come, you shall permit me, *continu'd he*, (at the same time seizing her other Hand, and looking

looking her full in the Face, with a Softness which was irresistible.) She wou'd have answer'd, but the Confusion she was in, not giving her leave, he made a sign to his Servant to attend his coming in his Chamber; and taking the Advantage of her Silence, forc'd her gently to sit down by him on a Couch. There did he begin to utter the tenderest Expressions, and such as a more experienc'd Heart than hers might have been deceiv'd by; and resolving to make himself some part of Reparation for the Disappointments he had met with from the other Ladies, having brought her by all the Arts of Love's bewitching Eloquence, to confess he was not indifferent to her, he rose and lock'd the Door, under pretence that the Servants might not be all in Bed, and shou'd any of them pass that way, might report the Condescensions she made in vouchsafing him this private Conference. She seem'd not much alarm'd at this Action, but when it was ensued by others, which cou'd not well be reconciled to Modesty, she trembled at the Danger to which she had expos'd herself, burst into Tears, and us'd Arguments to oblige him to desist; which had he been possess'd of any part of that Passion, which justly may be call'd Love, wou'd have been of force with

with him ; but the whole Proceedings of this Night had put him into a Humour, which made him deaf to all that pleaded against the Gratification of it.

He endeavour'd, however, to dry her Tears by repeated Promises of Marriage, laid the fault of his present treatment of her on the excess of his Love, which he said it was impossible to restrain ; and at last, what between a little Violence his eager Wishes made him use, and too great a Stock of tenderness on her side, he gain'd his Point, and fully triumph'd o'er her conquer'd Treasures. The Transport o'er, a Flood of repentant Tears again flow'd down her Cheeks ; she conjur'd him to be just to his Promises of Marriage, told him she look'd on herself as his Wife ; but 'till she was so in the World's Eye, she shou'd never know an easy Moment, and entreated he wou'd always love her. How impertinent such Discourses are after Enjoyment, the Reader need not be inform'd. Don Cardenio, one of the most inconstant of all his changing Sex, and who had never known for any Woman those racking Agonies of Passion, which endear Possession, and make the Bliss lasting as great, grew weary of these Remonstrances, and only forcing himself to speak some few of those soft things
which

which before he had seem'd so abundantly stored with, told her he wou'd detain her no longer from her Rest, lest it might be of prejudice to her Health; but retire to his own Room, to reflect on the Happiness she had afforded.—She sigh'd, and hung upon him, still weeping and reminding him of the Obligations he had laid himself under, of marrying her; he made no scruple of confessing them, and giving her two or three cold Kisses, took his leave.

In what sort of Reflections she pass'd the remainder of this fatal Night, is little to the purpose to relate, they being only such as a Virgin, thus undone, may easily be suppos'd to make, divided between Love, Fear, and Shame.

As for *Cardenio*, not all the Transports he had enjoy'd with one Mistress, cou'd make him forgetful of the Charms of the two others; and tho' his Wishes were at first as much confin'd to *Madam de Valerno*, as those of a Man so changeable in his Nature, yet in the late Freedoms he had taken with *Althea*, he discover'd some secret Graces both in her Person and Manner, that he was rather more wild for the Enjoyment of her, than her Sister: but believing he had no great Difficulties to surmount before he arrived at that Happiness,

pinefs, he laid himself down contentedly to rest.

Fortune seem'd inclin'd to favour his Designs on that Lady. *Isabella* being by the Disorders of her Mind detain'd much longer in her Bed than was her Custom, almost the first Person he saw in the Morning was *Donna Althea* crossing a Gallery which led down to a Parlour, which by reason of its being less pleasant than the other Rooms, was very little frequented. She had no sooner seen him, than casting back a Look of Invitation, she trip'd briskly down stairs; he followed her close, and being come into that Parlour, saluted her with Complaints on the Cruelty of his Destiny the Night before, and entreating she wou'd make some Appointment with him to repair that Misfortune. After some feign'd Reluctance she comply'd, and promis'd to admit him into her Chamber when the Family were in Bed; they had time for no more at present than a passionate Embrace, accompany'd with ten thousand Kisses, as an Earnest of that more elevated Joy they were soon to partake.

While they were thus employ'd, *Madam de Valerno*, who imagin'd not the charming Youth had a Wish beyond her, was setting her whole Wits at work how to make

make him happy; and having heard her Husband say he shou'd ride out of Town that Evening, to a Place whence it was impossible he shou'd return 'till next Day, thought she shou'd never find a more convenient Opportunity than this: but fearing that on the Count's Entreaty, who never thought himself happy but when he was with him, he might be prevailed on to accompany him, she took Pen and Paper, and wrote these Lines:

Dearest CARDENIO,

M^R Husband goes this Night abroad, let him not persuade you to go with him.—I have much to say to you, and wou'd take the Opportunity of his Absence to talk in private with you.—I do not forget the Vow I made to be yours; but you must remember also, that I made a prior one to the Count never to be another's during his Life.—I charge you therefore not to transgress the Bounds of Honour, and in confidence of your Obedience will meet you this Night in that Grotto which had like to have been once the Scene of my undoing. Come now prepared with better Thoughts, for because I will not venture 'till I am certain no-body is stirring but my self, I shall let my Women put me to bed, and rise from thence, you may be sure, all unarm'd for Defence.—Tempt me
I not

not therefore, I conjure you, oh ! too lovely for
the Repose of

The Unhappy

V A L E R N O.

This she folded up, designing to put it into his hands the first Opportunity ; but so close did *Althea* and *Isabella* keep to him, whenever the *Count* was not present, that it was impossible for her to deliver it without being observ'd. At last bethinking her of a new Song she had in her Pocket, she took it out, and with it the Letter, intending to give him the one with the other ; but such was her ill Fortune, that in the Confusion she was in, she drop'd the Paper of the most consequence, and put into his hands only the Song : he retired to the Window to read it, and she returned to her Seat. The *Count*, who happen'd to stand near the Place where *Cardenio* was, seeing the Letter fall, took it up without being observ'd by his Wife ; who, as I have said before, turn'd away as soon as she had deliver'd it. That which *Cardenio* receiv'd being indeed a Song, he presently began to sing it with a Grace which more inflamed the fair Triumvirate. But the *Count* gave little Attention either to the Words or the Musick,

Musick, and, in a short time, left the Room, impatient to examine the Contents of that Letter; but when he had, never was Amazement equal to his: 'tis difficult to say, if Grief or Rage was most predominant in his Soul, but 'tis certain that one abated the other: for, had either of them got the victory, it must have burst in some fatal Effects on himself, or those who had occasion'd it.— He staid some time alone, giving a loose to the o'er-boiling Passions; but when he had the power of Consideration, and could calmly deliberate what was best to be done, he grew more moderate. To make an open Brule with *Cardenio*, he thought would but proclaim his own Dishonour, and the Falshood of his Wife, whom yet he could not resolve to part with.— He therefore contrived a Stratagem, which promis'd him not only the preventing that Shame he dreaded, but also afforded a probability of reclaiming the fair Inconstant, and fixing her for ever after in the Paths of Virtue.

At his return to the Company, he assumed a Composedness of Countenance which was wonderful, considering the Disorders of his Heart: and the hour being arriv'd, in which he had design'd to go out of

I 2 Town,

Town, he took horse, and attended but by one Servant, went from his House, but not to such a distance as was expected.

Madam *De Valerno* could not the whole Evening get one word in private with *Cardenio*; but she troubled herself not much about it, because depending that he had her Letter, she doubted not if he would be punctual. Supper was no sooner over, than *Cardenio* counterfeited an excessive Drouziness, which the fair Countess presently believing was an excuse to go to bed, that he might the sooner come to the dear Grotto, *Althea* took it as done in her favour; and both these Ladies join'd in affecting to be ill Company, and at last propos'd retiring to their several Apartments: which being agreed to by all, in taking Leave, Madam *De Valerno* gave *Cardenio* a Look, in which she summon'd all her Charms, and made him half angry that he had engag'd himself with *Althea* that Night, another promising him as good an Opportunity with her; but he knew not when the Count's Absence would afford him one equal to this with his Wife. There was now no remedy, however; and the expectation of the Bliss he believ'd *Althea* capable of bestowing, made him soon
easy

easy.— As *Isabella* went out of the Room, he saw her turn towards that in which they had pass'd some happy moments together the Night before ; and the other Ladies having their Faces turn'd the other way, she stopp'd short, and made a sign that she would expect him there. He knew very well that they all imagin'd he would take this occasion of entertaining them ; and as there was no way to divide himself, fell into a whimsical kind of a Refrery, from which rousing himself, he sung two Lines of a Song he had learn'd in *England*, which no body present understood, and seem'd very *à propos* to his Circumstances :

*Apart let me view each heavenly Fair,
For three at a time no Mortal can bear.*

All being separated, *Don Cardenio* thought it most prudent to go to *Isabella*, because had she been disappointed of speaking to him, he thought it might raise some Suspicions in her Mind, which would occasion her to observe him more closely than was consistent with his Designs. He therefore went into the Room where she expected him ; and after having talk'd to her in the most tender manner he could invent, re-

peated his Promise of Marriage, and assur'd her, that in a very small time he would declare his Intentions to the Count. He took his Leave, and retir'd to his own Chamber, there to wait till the Silence of the House let him know it was a fit time to steal to that of *Althea's*.

The Countess, who, tho' put to Bed, forgot not her Appointment so far as to fall asleep; when she found all things hush'd, softly rose, and throwing only a loose Night-gown on, repair'd to the Grotto, where she was immediately receiv'd with open Arms, by the supposed *Cardenio*, but in reality her Husband; who, leaving his Servant and Horses at a little Village near *Salamanca*, return'd at Night, and enter'd the Back-gate, the Key of which he took with him. She repuls'd the Freedoms he immediately began to treat her with; but it was in such a manner that he found she desired not to be obey'd. — In fine, being resolved to try with what sort of Endearments she would behave to a Lover, he permitted her to sin in Theory, and, in the Character of *Cardenio*, obtain'd all she had ever granted to him as a Husband.

Having made this Experiment, he had no longer any need of Dissimulation; but
speak-

speaking to her aloud, by the Accents of his Voice, as well as by the Reproaches he made her, soon discover'd the Deceit.

—— Amazement, Shame, and Remorse, at once seiz'd on her Spirits ; she had not power to make any reply ; and overcome with the Violence of such extraordinary Emotions, fell fainting on the Floor : but soon reviving, and struck with the most poignant sense of her Transgression, burst into a flood of Tears, and throwing herself at his feet, conjur'd him to forgive her.

—— I have nothing to alledge, *said she*, or to excuse, or alleviate my Crime ; 'tis plainly proved against me, and I confess it monstrous.—— All I entreat, is Pardon. Banish me, but do not hate me.—— Rise, Madam ! (*reply'd the Count, with a Voice that denoted only Grief and Tendernefs*) if I had not design'd to pardon you, I had proceeded otherwise : I should have suffer'd you, and the false Cardenio, to have met here, in this intended Scene of guilty Joys have surprized you together, expos'd your Shame, sued out a Divorce, and murder'd him.—— But since your Crime was but design'd, I took this Method to prevent the perpetration of it, and by abundant Love, and soft Forgiveness, to bring you back to your first Vows again.——

Oh something more than Man, can it be possible you should be thus divinely Good! cry'd she, in a Transport of Gratitude; here then I swear to make it the study of my future Life to merit such a Proof of Tendernefs and Pity. Many other such Expressions did her Joy send forth; after which, he acquainted her by what means he had discover'd her Inclinations: but she cou'd not hear the Contents of that Letter repeated, without being ready to die with Shame; on which, conjuring him to speak of it no more, and contrive some way that she might never see *Cardenio* more, convinced this tender Husband, that her Duty and her Virtue had once more resum'd their Empire in her Soul.

While this was transacting in the Grotto; *Isabella* not perfectly pleas'd with the Behaviour of *Cardenio*, and suspecting he had some other Design in his head, which occasion'd him to treat her with so much Coldness, was resolv'd to watch him; and making several Errands, backward and forward by his Chamber, perceiv'd the Light still burning: which confirming her that he was not yet in Bed, she went not to hers; but concealing herself in a Closet near his Room, she saw him come out of it in his Night-gown, and after extinguish-
ing

ing the Candle, pass softly through the Gallery.—It presently struck into her Mind, that he had made an Affignation with *Althea* in the Garden, there being a Passage to it that way——she fear'd to follow him too close, lest her Footsteps shou'd be heard ; but after tarrying a little longer in her Concealment, went to the Garden-door, which being left open by the Countess, she no longer doubted, but it was that way he took ; and full of Rage, Jealousy, and Despair, resolv'd now to detect him in his Falshood, and expose *Althea*, she went directly to that Tree, where she had the Night before surpriz'd them together ; but finding no body there, and convinc'd they were in the Garden, wou'd not forsake it, till she had vented some part of her Indignation in Reproaches on them. She came at length to the Grotto, where the *Count* and *Madam de Valerno* were in the Conversation before-mention'd ; she heard the Sound of Voices, and her Assurance, that it was those she sought, not permitting her to distinguish the difference, she flew in, accosting them in these terms——What Excuse now, ye shameful Pair, cry'd she ? Has *Cardenio* drank too hard to-night, that he seeks this Place to sleep in ? And do you, *Donna Althea*, want as-

sistance to rouse him from his Lethargy?—Wretch ! Fool that I was, to give Credit to an Evasion so easy to be seen through—Base inconstant *Cardenio*, is not the ruin of one of the Family of thy Friend sufficient to content thee?——Is this the Effect of all thy Vows to me?——thy pretended Passion? Thou Monster of thy Sex ! 'Tis easy to believe these Words must prodigiously alarm those who heard them ; but having let her go on with these Exclamations, till the whole Affair was discover'd ; I pity your Indiscretion, Cousin, *said the Count*, first to resign your Honour to one so much a Stranger to you as *Don Cardenio*, and then to expose your Misfortune by Reproaches, such as these.——Had the Persons you imagin'd been here, it had been little to your Reputation to betray yourself to a Rival, and wholly unavailing to retrieve your Lover. The Surprise she was in, to find it was the *Count* she had all this time been speaking to, and the Shame of having her Fault known to him, made her send forth a great Shriek ; but that Gentleman, wholly compos'd of Good-nature, being truly concern'd for her, made her sit down and relate to him the History of her Undoing ; after which, he assur'd her, he wou'd omit nothing in his power to re-

retrieve her Honour by Marriage with *Cardenio* ; but if his Endeavours fail'd, bid her for her own sake to conceal what had happen'd. The Countess, who by this Accident was convinc'd that *Cardenio* regarded her not with that Passion he pretended, sincerely rejoic'd that she had escap'd the Snare laid for her, and resolv'd never to encourage the Beginnings of a Tendernefs for any other but her Husband.

The Count having finish'd his Admonitions to *Isabella*, they all left the Grotto, and as they were coming down the great Walk which led to the House, they perceiv'd a blazing Flame in the Window of *Althea's* Chamber — it plainly shew'd itself to be something set on fire, not for Convenience nor Light; on which the Count ran hastily up stairs, follow'd by the Ladies in a terrible fright : finding the Door lock'd, and the Danger admitting no room for Ceremony, he burst it open, calling at the same time to his Servants to rise ; at their Entrance, they found it was the Window-curtains, which by a Candle, being carelessly left burning on the Table, had taken fire. The Count, without any other Assistance than his own, immediately tore them down, and setting his Foot upon them,

them, stifled the Flame ; but then there was kindled a much greater in the Heart of *Isabella*, who looking towards the Bed, saw *Cardenio* there, close circled in the Arms of *Althea*. They were in a sound Sleep when the Door was burst open, but immediately waking, saw themselves expos'd, without any Excuse to make their Guilt seem less, and both equally ashamed, tho' for different Reasons, conceal'd their Faces under the Bedcloths. Rise, cry'd the Count, thou Breaker of the Laws of Hospitality, rise ; nor let my Servants, whom my Call has rais'd, be witnesses of my Sister's Fault. He had scarce spoke these Words, when several of the Men run into the Room ; but were soon order'd to return to their Beds, their Lord telling them the Danger was over. After which, the Ladies retir'd, and the Count again cry'd to Don *Cardenio* to rise ; which he comply'd with, and Don *Valerno* taking him into another Room, let him know he was not unacquainted with his Amour with *Isabella*, whose Wrongs, as he said, he cou'd not now repair, being equally engag'd with *Althea* ; he desir'd him to quit his House by Break of Day. The remembrance of our former Friendship, added he, will not suffer me to call you to
that

that account I wou'd another Man ; but if I ever see you again within these Walls, expect to be treated as an Enemy. All *Cardenio's* Wit wou'd not now furnish him with an Apology for what he had done. He stood confus'd, and asham'd, and made no other reply, than that he wou'd obey his Orders.

Accordingly he did, and before the Sun rose was some Miles distant from *Salamanca*, quitting it with as much Ease as he had found in conquering the Virtue of *Althea* and *Isabella* ; regretting only, that he had not obtain'd the same Favour of *Madam de Valerno*.

Isabella was for some time inconsolable for the loss of her Honour and her Lover——*Althea*, of a Disposition more alert, was not so easily cast down ; but unable to endure the grave Reproofs daily made by her Brother and Sister, she forsook their House, and went to *Madrid*, where afterwards meeting with the charming Inconstant, they renew'd their Amour, and continu'd it till new Engagements on both sides made neither uneasy to break off.

The Count and his Wife pass'd the remainder of their Days in perfect Tranquillity ; he never bringing a Temptation
of

of the like nature in her way again;
and she remaining fix'd in her Reso-
lution to avoid all such dangerous Inter-
views.





T H E
 Hasty Marriage ;

O R,

Love not to be Controul'd.



O N *Pedro de Monroe*, had a Daughter justly esteem'd the greatest Beauty in *Madrid*: She was so much the general Toast, that whenever any one had a mind to praise a Woman, they wou'd cry, she had a Resemblance of *Donna Angelina* ; for so was this young Charmer call'd. From the Dawn of Infancy were her Perfections beheld with Admiration, and scarce had she arriv'd at the Age of Thirteen, when the
 Sons

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Sons of the noblest, and most wealthy Grandees in all *Spain* solicited her for Marriage. Among the Number was Don *Alphonso de Piralto*, a young Gentleman, as eminent for his Personal Loveliness, as he was for his Extraction, being descended from a Family which were originally Monarchs of *Castile* ; his Possessions, however, being inferior to some others who call'd themselves her Lovers, Don *Pedro* commanded her to refrain giving any ear to the Declarations he made her : But alas ! she had already too far list'ned to the pleasing Tale, to be able to obey him. So sweetly from his Mouth sounded the Name, that from any other it seem'd untuneable and harsh ; she knew no other Blessing than his Conversation, nor liv'd but in his sight, and it was not now in her power to recall her Heart. With Tears she acquainted him with this Alteration in her Fate, and endeavour'd not to conceal that there was nothing in the World she more desir'd, than the Means of disobeying an Order she look'd upon to be the most cruel that cou'd be. Don *Alphonso*, who lov'd her with a Passion scarce to be equal'd, cou'd not hear the News of so great a Misfortune, and behold her Griefs, without falling into Agonies, which are
not

not to be express'd. He sought her Father, fell on his Knees before him ; conjur'd him to have pity on his Youth, and Love ; knelt, wept, almost dy'd away between the mingled Convulsions of Hope and Fear——Sometimes his Griefs appear'd to have an influence o'er the Soul of him to whom they were made known —— sometimes, all inexorable, he spoke and look'd.——The old Gentleman had certainly a great regard for him on the account of his Birth and good Qualities, few Men being able to boast a greater share of personal Perfections, or acquir'd Accomplishments ; but then that fatal Error, by which Fathers are too often for the real Happiness of their Children sway'd, entirely got the better of all other Considerations. He thought he cou'd no way testify his Love for his Child so much, as to provide for her a wealthy Husband ; and as to the extremity of that Passion which *Alphonso* pleaded, he either had never felt the force of it, or had forgot it——In fine, the Lover was able to obtain nothing from him ; and after a long Conversation in the manner I have describ'd, he was oblig'd to quit his House, no more to enter it.

Angelina, on the other side, being yet too young to have learn'd the Art of Diffimulation, conceal'd not the Grief she conceiv'd at the Banishment of so dear a Lover ; she tore her Hair, she raved, refus'd all Company, and shutting herself up in her Chamber, gave a Loose to the most ungovernable Despair. Don *Pedro*, tho' he most tenderly lov'd her, suffer'd not himself to shew any remorse for what he had done ; and not doubting but her Grievs wou'd abate by degrees, attempted not to contradict them ; being well enough acquainted with human Nature, to know, that in the still and silent Passions lie the greatest Dangers ; that Spirit which shou'd feed the Flame, evaporates, when vented in Tears or Exclamations, and in time leaves the Bosom free and tranquil, as it had never been. 'Tis certain, that it frequently happens so, and one wou'd not swear but that it wou'd have had the same effect on this young Lady, had her Lover not been too assiduous to permit the Experiment to be made. He had some small Acquaintance with a young Maid of Condition, who, by reason of the extraordinary Friendship between their Families, was extremely intimate with *Angelina* ; he found means to improve the little Knowledge he before had

had of her, and making her the Confidante of his Love and his Despair, he told the Story in Terms so Pity-moving, that she cou'd not refuse taking upon her the Charge of a Letter, which he had written, and entreated might be deliver'd to that Mistress of his Soul. She not only assur'd him she wou'd do as he desir'd, but also bring him an Answer back, and from time to time carry on the Correspondence between them. 'Tis easy to guess the Transport he was in, to have succeeded so far; he hoped now to have an Opportunity, by the means of this obliging Lady, to disappoint totally all the Measures the cruel *Don Pedro* cou'd take to separate him from his beloved, and equally loving *Angelina*.

But *Maria*, for that was her Name, found the Accomplishment of her Promise a thing much more difficult than she had imagin'd: *Angelina* little suspecting on what Errand she came, wou'd not suffer her to be admitted, tho' she entreated it with all imaginable Earnestness. She went several days, but to no other purpose than at first; at last, to gratify the Impatience of *Alphonso*, whose Condition she truly pitied, and to discharge herself of the Promise she had made him, she contriv'd

triv'd a Stratagem, which answer'd her Expectations in as full a manner as she cou'd have hoped. She caus'd two Men to make a kind of mock Fight in the Street, just under her Window ; they had Pistols which they discharg'd over each other's Heads, and then drew Foils instead of Swords, with which they seem'd very furiously to engage ; one of them cry'd, I will defend *Don Alphonso de Piralto's* Cause, not only against thee, but the whole World beside.——*Alphonso* is a Villain, return'd the other. The report of the Pistols, and that Name very often repeated to much the same purpose as before, made *Angelina* immediately open the Window, over-against which, *Donna Maria* stood ; and the Croud being gather'd thick about the pretended Antagonists, she had leisure unobserved to pull the Letter out of her Pocket, and holding it with a beseeching Air, and at the same time pointing to the two Men and smiling, made her fair Friend imagine there was indeed something of a Mystery in her Desires of seeing her. She knew that she had some little Acquaintance with *Don Alphonso*, and part of the Truth came presently into her head : fir'd with the Thought, that there was a possibility that the Letter she saw in her Hand

might

might be from that dear Youth, she run to the Stair-case, and calling to the Servants, bid them desire *Donna Maria* to come in, whom she said might be frighten'd with the Croud. One of them ask'd if she wou'd see her : Yes, *said she*, (now but affecting an Unwillingness) you may admit her, I have been too rude to a Woman of her Quality already : on which, she was immediately introduc'd. The first Civilities being past, and *Maria* a little revenging herself for having been put to so much pains to gain Admittance, by raillying the Melancholy of her Friend, she made her full Reparation, by presenting her with the Letter; which the other catching out of her Hand, with an eager Impatience, stay'd not to thank her till she had open'd it, and read these Lines.

*To the Everlasting Mistress of my Soul, and
sweet Inspirer of my every Wish, the Lovely
and Adorable Angelina.*

‘ **L** O V E in nothing so greatly proves
‘ himself a Deity, as in surmounting
‘ even the most seeming Impossibilities, to
‘ preserve alive his Fire in the Heart
‘ which once has entertain'd it——Little,
‘ I believe, did my Charmer imagine I
‘ shou'd

' shou'd be able to convey to her the Dic-
 ' tates of my Passion, even this distant
 ' way ; yet has my ever industrious En-
 ' deavours at length happily succeeded, and
 ' I have the Blessing to tell you, that Ab-
 ' sence and the Obstacles which oppose
 ' our Love, add but Increase of Vigour to
 ' my never-dying Flame——I gaze in Idea
 ' over all your Heaven of Charms, enjoy
 ' your eternal Presence, feast on the
 ' ravishing Musick of your Voice, and
 ' am perhaps more favour'd in the sha-
 ' dowy Felicity, than your too scrupulous
 ' Modesty wou'd permit me in reality ; at
 ' least, while the Commands of so rigid a
 ' Father deny me the possibility of making
 ' that an Act of Duty, which I wou'd fain
 ' owe only to Love.——Pardon the Free-
 ' dom of my daring Wishes ; did I not in-
 ' dulse them in the most extravagant de-
 ' gree which Fancy cou'd invent, Despair
 ' had e'er now depriv'd you of your
 ' Adorer, and me of my Life ; for both,
 ' my lovely *Angelina* ! must know a Pe-
 ' riod before one can cease.——It is as
 ' utterly impossible to live without loving
 ' you, as it is for me to love without Li-
 ' ving, I mean *Lingring* ; for Life in ab-
 ' sence from you, is but a kind of slow
 ' Death, which shows us Heaven and
 ' Hell

‘ Hell at once ; Hope represents a Pro-
‘ spect of the one, and its contrary Passion
‘ of the other.——Oh when shall I no
‘ longer have recourse to Theory to ease
‘ my Pains?——When shall I be in
‘ earnest blest with your dear Pre-
‘ sence.——That, you will say, lies in me
‘ to answer to myself——’tis I indeed
‘ who shou’d contrive the Means, the ut-
‘ most part that I can hope from you, is
‘ to permit me to seek them.——O grant
‘ that Blessing to my longing Love.——Let
‘ me know that you will allow a private
‘ Interview, and sure that Passion which
‘ so powerfully excites me to desire it,
‘ will also inspire me with some lucky
‘ Thought to obtain it, when once you are
‘ so divinely good, to assure me you will
‘ raise no Scruples against it yourself. The
‘ charitable *Maria*, who in pity of my Ago-
‘ nies, consents to bring you this, flatters
‘ me with the charming Expectation of a
‘ Reply, such as I wish : Oh be not you
‘ less merciful, but contribute all that you
‘ can to the relief of a bleeding and a bro-
‘ ken Heart.——*Fate* is but too severe,
‘ and leaves me little to obtain in competi-
‘ tion with what it debars me from ;
‘ vouchsafe therefore that little, if you
‘ wish

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‘ wish not to crown your Triumph with
‘ the Death of your

Most passionately Enamour’d,

And most faithfully devoted Adorer,

Alphonso de Piralto.

P. S. ‘ Favour my burning Impati-
‘ ence with a speedy Answer, On thou
‘ Goddess of my Fate, and lovely Dispen-
‘ ser of my Bliss or Torment.’

All the Transports which can fire a young Heart, tenderly loving, and passionately desirous of being belov’d, took up that of Donna *Angelina* at the receipt of this dear Billet; which she kiss’d a thousand and a thousand times, without being able to speak one word to the obliging Messenger, from whose hands she receiv’d it; nor wou’d she disturb the agreeable Resv’ry she saw her in, but suffer’d her to indulge all the tender Emotions of her Soul : till recollecting herself, she grew asham’d of the little notice she had taken of her Favours, and thank’d and embrac’d her for them, in a manner which let her see it

was not Ingratitude, but an Over-surprize of unexpected Joy which had render'd her thus long forgetful of every thing but itself. From her Acknowledgments to her, she fell into a Discourse of *Don Alphonso*; she wanted to be inform'd with what words he first made her the Confidante of his Passion, how he prevail'd on her to befriend him in it; she long'd to know each Particular of his Behaviour, and examin'd into the Air of his very Looks, when talking of her: which *Donna Maria* having describ'd, as near the Truth as possible; reminded her, that a too long Conversation with a Person she had so often refus'd to see, and but lately consented to admit, might give room for Inspection into the Cause of so sudden a Change in her Humour; and therefore desir'd she wou'd write an Answer to *Alphonso*, which she assur'd her she wou'd deliver with the same Fidelity she had done that which he entrusted with her. *Angelina* suspected not the Sincerity of her Words, and taking Pen and Paper, sat down, and gave a loose to the soft Passion, with which she was animated in these Terms:

K

To

*To the most Worthy of Mankind, the Lovely
and Accomplish'd Alphonso.*

‘ **T**O tell you with what Extacy I re-
 ‘ ceiv’d this Proof of your Affection,
 ‘ wou’d be altogether impossible——it
 ‘ is not in Words to speak your vast De-
 ‘ sert ; nor the Sense my judging Soul has
 ‘ of it——Devoted to Love and you,
 ‘ Duty no longer has the power to sway
 ‘ my Actions : Don *Pedro* in vain com-
 ‘ mands me to forget you ; while you con-
 ‘ tinue thus ravishingly kind and faithful,
 ‘ my Heart shall never cease to avow its
 ‘ tenderest Acknowledgments ; nor do I
 ‘ think I ought to blush, when I confess a
 ‘ Passion for an Object worthy of it,
 ‘ and who loves me ;——Reason and
 ‘ Gratitude join with Inclination to take
 ‘ your part, and filial Duty is too weak to
 ‘ combat with such united Forces.——
 ‘ Let Love, ingenious in contriving, in-
 ‘ spire you with the Means of seeing me,
 ‘ and you shall find there are no hazards
 ‘ so great I will not risque, to comply
 ‘ with your Request : I shou’d chide the
 ‘ liberty you take in telling me the Ways you
 ‘ find out to beguile the Pains of Absence ;
 ‘ but,

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‘ alarm me with Fears, nor thou with Inclinations past thy Reason, or thy Honour to controul. — Thus both are safe, and continuing the course of our Affections as they were begun, need not fear but that we shall in time meet that Reward our Constancy deserves. — Farewell, dearest of the World, and only Joy of

Your most Affectionate,

and truly Devoted,

Angelina de Monroe.

P. S. ‘ Let me hear often from you by the same kind hand that brings me this: Her natural Sweetness of Disposition and Sincerity, assures me we have much to hope from such a Friend. — Once more, adieu, dear and for ever to be remembred, *Alphonso*.

Having read this to Donna Maria, thinking she cou’d do no less than give her that proof of the Confidence she repos’d in her, that Lady took her leave, and hastened home, where the passionate *Alphonso* impatiently

patiently expected her. It wou'd be need-
less to repeat the extatick Expressions he
fell into at the receipt of so welcome a
Billet, or the Retributions he made the
obliging *Maria* ; both were conformable
to the Affection he had for *Angelina*. But
that kind Lady told him, she thought it
not sufficient to prove the Compassion she
had for him, that she had done thus much ;
she wou'd yet give him more and greater
Testimonies of her Friendship, as soon as
in her power, which she said wou'd short-
ly be ; but wou'd not let him know in
what manner, tho' he very much press'd
it.

The state of this lately unhappy Lover
was now greatly alter'd ; not a day pass'd
without his writing to the dear Object of
his constant Flame, and receiving Answers
from her, such as his utmost hopes cou'd
form ; all his time was divided between
this employment, and contriving Strata-
gems to see her ; but tho' no Man had a
greater Genius, a more ready Wit, or
more industriously studied for it, yet cou'd
he find none which cou'd flatter him with
Success ; and that distant Conversation
which he enjoy'd with *Angelina*, tho' it
transported him at the first attainment,
yet encroaching Love wou'd not be long
contented thus ; he languish'd for Pleasures

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more substantial ; and tho' the Seat of that Passion is the Spirit, yet the Senses have so much concern it, that they will not suffer it, to subsist merely on Food that is Elemental : He grew restless, and almost distracted for the real Society of the charming Maid ; no more cou'd he find ease in Speculation ; her Idea, once so ravishing to his Fancy, now added only to his Pains, inflicting severer Burnings for the lovely Substance.——Quite wild was he become with racking, raging Wishes, when, contrary to his Expectations, beyond his Hopes he receiv'd from the industrious, the ever kind *Maria*, the softest Balsam that Love or Fate cou'd yield. The Father and Mother of that young Lady being retir'd to their Villa, she entreated Don *Pedro* to consent his Daughter shou'd pass a little time with her ; Change of Place, she said, might divert the Melancholy of *Angelina*, as her Society wou'd be agreeable to her, being left in a great House without any other Company than a few Servants. The old Don, who little suspected she carry'd on any Intrigue for his Daughter, or indeed that she was acquainted with *Alphonso*, was very well pleas'd with the Proposal, and commanded her to accompany her home ; which, after a seeming Reluctance, the better to prevent any Conjecture

jecture of Truth, she obeyed him in. They were no sooner arriv'd, - than Donna *Maria* sent a Servant in whom she cou'd confide, to let *Alphonso* know she desir'd to speak with him immediately : He had too many Obligations to her not to have obey'd her Summons, even tho' he had not imagin'd himself interested in it ; but as he doubted not but it was to acquaint him with something concerning his beloved *Angelina*, he seem'd to borrow Wings of that Passion, with which he was so powerfully animated, and was at her House before the Messenger cou'd relate that he was coming.

But where is that Elegance of Language, or Force of Thought which can, unfeeling it, describe the vast profusion of unutterable Joy, which fill'd the whole Heart of the enamour'd Youth, at beholding his Soul's Charmer, the almost equally transported *Angelina*, sitting in a Chair directly opposite to the Door by which he enter'd the Drawing-room ? He wou'd have flown to her, and thrown himself at her Feet ; but she prevented him, by giving a sudden spring from her seat, and catching him in her Arms.— There was nothing to be heard for a considerable time, but Oh my *Angelina* ! my *Alphonso* !

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as tho' each thought all Language was compriz'd in the other's Name. But when the Rapture was enough abated to give them leisure to reflect to whom they were indebted for it; what tender, what truly grateful Embraces did both of them not give *Maria*? But that Lady, who studied nothing more than how to oblige them, wou'd not suffer them to waste such precious Moments in Compliments to her; and not doubting but that they might have something to say to each other, which it was not proper a third Person shou'd be witness of, withdrew and left them together.

'Tis certain indeed, that she was not deceiv'd in her Conjecture; Lovers have a thousand little Softnesses, which seem trifling and impertinent to a disinterested Person, but are vastly agreeable and pleasing to each other;——the tender Pressure of the Hand,——the languishing Loll and Recline of the Head,——the short Sigh, the Parenthesis of Kisses,——and other such like Tokens of the tender Flame, are by People of Sense restrain'd from publick view; but are in reality the great Delights, as well as Symptoms of that Passion. Neither of these but knew the utmost Delicacies of it; even *Angelina*,
young

young as she was, wanted not to be inform'd in every little Particular of the sweet Infatuation. — She cou'd construe Looks, read the Soul through the Eyes ; — converse by Sympathy ; in fine, she had Learning enough in Love's Science to have become a Priestess at his Shrine, had she liv'd in an Age when Altars were erected to that Deity.

Being such therefore as I have describ'd them, 'tis not to be doubted, but that they pass'd the Moments allow'd them by *Maria* in the utmost Elegancies of Desire ; at her return they restrain'd themselves a little, but not so much as to give them Pain, or let her perceive they made use of any Reserve before her. It growing late, *Don Alphonso* took his leave ; which he did with the more ease, because he was to repeat his Visit the next Evening.

Nothing hap'ning to interrupt the Felicity of these Meetings, they were continu'd for many Nights and Days ; but Love, who takes pleasure sometimes to torment his Votaries, thinking they had partook as much as came to their share of the Sweets he was capable of affording, now thought fit to let them know the severest Bitters. *Don Pedro* came one day to visit *Donna Maria*, and to take his

Daughter away: The former of these Ladies, faithful to her Trust, oppos'd the Proposal with all the Arguments she cou'd alledge, telling him, that since Donna *Angelina* had been with her, the former Melanchely of her Humour was very much abated, and that she herself shou'd die of the Vapors, when depriv'd of that agreeable Companion. To which Don *Pedro* reply'd, That to reconcile this, he shou'd rejoice she wou'd give his Daughter as much of her Company at his House. But she representing to him, that that cou'd not be, because in the absence of her Parents she was entrusted with the Care of the Family; he said then, that *Angelina* shou'd make frequent Visits to her, but that something had happen'd which oblig'd him to take her home for the present.

Our young Beauty was extremely troubled at this Turn in her Affairs, not being able to imagine for what cause her Father, who had so gladly suffer'd her to accompany *Maria*, shou'd so suddenly command her back: but long it was not that she remain'd in this Suspence, scarce had she enter'd her Father's House, when he acquainted her that Don *Francisco de Hermiolo* had solicited him on her account; that he had consider'd his Character and
Cir-

Circumstances, and was so much pleas'd with both, that he thought she cou'd not be matched to greater advantage; and therefore commanded her to receive his Addresses, as from a Man whom he approv'd of, and she design'd to make her Husband. This was a Thunderbolt indeed to her who heard it; she burst into Tears, and falling on her Knees, entreated him not to go about to force her Inclinations: She represented to him that she had utterly abandon'd the Man most dear to her, in obedience to him; and therefore hoped he would permit her to remain in a single State, rather than compel her to loath'd Embraces. Don *Pedro* express'd the utmost Impatience at that last word, and repeating it; Loath'd? cry'd he; What is there in Don *Hermiolo* to be loath'd? Fond Girl! thou but vainly attemptest to make me think thou hast forgotten *Alphonso*, while thou expressest so unreasonable an Aversion for another, in every Eye but thine more worthy of thy Love. He added, that as he best knew what was fit for her, he shou'd make her sensible that in this he wou'd be obey'd. Love, which inspires some share of Artifice, even in Hearts the most innocent and unexperenc'd, immediately reminded her that the
grea-

greater Reluctance she made show of, the more strictly wou'd she be observ'd; and by that means be depriv'd of the Power of Conversing for the future with her dear *Alphonso*. She therefore assur'd *Don Pedro*, that she wou'd suffer Death, rather than his Displeasure, and that she wou'd make use of her utmost Efforts to render *Don Hermiolo* more agreeable to her. This Answer perfectly pleas'd the unsuspecting Father; and having prais'd her Compliance, said no more to her at that time. In the Evening the expected Lover was introduc'd to her by *Don Pedro*; but with what difficulty she forc'd herself to treat him with the Civility she had promis'd, those only who truly love, and by that Passion for one, are render'd inexorable to all beside, have the power to judge. Neither the Father, nor the Lover, however, having penetration enough to discover the Imposition; she was neither confin'd to her Chamber; nor debarr'd from making any Visits she pleas'd, as is the Custom in *Spain*, when a young Maid of Condition is thought refractory to the Designs of a Parent.

Enjoying by this means her Liberty, she went early the next Morning to *Maria*, and related to her the melancholy Reason
for

for which she was remov'd from her House, and after some Discourse how she shou'd evade a Marriage so fatal to her own and *Alphonso's* Hopes, she made an Appointment of meeting that Gentleman at *Maria's*; this Lady continuing her obliging Behaviour, and assuring her that nothing on her part shou'd be neglected to bring their Loves to a happy Period.

Accordingly, she acquainted Don *Alphonso* both with the Danger which threatned his Desires, and the good Wishes *Angelina* still had for him: but the latter part of her Intelligence gave him not half that Joy, as the former did Disquiet; he very well knew the arbitrary Power of a Parent, and that if Don *Pedro* pleas'd to make use of it, all the Reluctance of *Angelina* wou'd be in vain.——He doubted not but she wou'd be compell'd to give her Hand to *Hermiolo*, and appear'd like a Man distracted and desperate. *Maria* did the best she cou'd to comfort him, but in vain; and never was a Condition more pityable than his, 'till the Hour in which he expected *Angelina* brought her to his sight. The Tendernefs she express'd for him, the Tears she shed at beholding his Disorders in part abated them; but when he consider'd that the Love she had for him serv'd only

only to render herself unhappy, and not in the least enabled her to give him the Gratification his Passion wanted, every Pang return'd with double Force upon him ; he fell into Agonies which gave her cause to fear some Act of Desperation wou'd ensue. Sharing in every Grief he felt, she kneel'd down, and lifting up her Hands and Eyes to Heaven, she endeavour'd to assuage the Tempest in his Soul by these Words: ' Be Witness every Saint of what ' I swear, *said she*, and record it in that ' Book wherein the dread Account of ' every human Creature is set down. — If ' ever in Thought, much less in Act or Word, ' I yield, or suffer myself to be compell'd to ' the Bed of any but *Alphonso*, may Fate's ' severest Curses fall upon me, — may my ' inconstant Heart feel Hell's worst Plagues, ' ——— strange Disappointments meet my ' changing Love, ——— and sudden, horrid ' Death become my Bridegroom.' So strong an Imprecation, and utter'd with such Vehemence, surpriz'd *Alphonso* into a kind of Rapture, and putting himself into the same Posture she had been in ; ' May Death then ' take us both at once, *said he*, when once ' separated past Hope of meeting more in ' Love.' But remembering himself that she had now given a Vow never to be but his,

he

he wou'd not be indebted for the Obligation, but made as solemn a one as Words cou'd form, never to think with Tenderness of any other Woman. In fine, what past between them, was, in effect, more than a Marriage; and when oblig'd to part, *Alphonso* suffer'd her to take her Leave, with less Regret than he had ever done, because he now thought himself secure of her; and that whatever happen'd, she cou'd not be another's, without becoming one of the most perjur'd, as well as inconstant Women in the World.

The Moment he turn'd from her to go out of the Gate of *Maria's* House, three Drops of Blood fell from his Nose: He started at the Omen, and remembering what both had sworn, return'd to acquaint her with it. She smil'd at so superstitious an Observation, but to ease his Fears, again repeated the same Oath as before; after which, recovering himself as well as he was able, from a certain Heaviness and Palpitation of the Heart, which that moment seiz'd him, he took his last Embrace, and departed, little imagining it was indeed the last he ever shou'd be able to give, or receive from her. But now, alas! came on the said Catastrophe of their Fate; soon were they made to know the Error of rash Vows,

208 *The Hasty Marriage; Or,*
Vows, and the terrible Consequence which
attends the Breach of them.

Before *Angelina* had Opportunity to
give him a second Meeting, the Parents
of *Donna Maria* return'd to *Madrid*, and
by their Presence prevented their Daugh-
ter from being so serviceable to the Lo-
vers as she had been while they were ab-
sent.—All she now cou'd do, was to con-
vey Letters between them, which she con-
stantly did, as often as she cou'd get an
Opportunity of speaking to *Alphonso*; but
that being only in the Chappel, and there
too only when she went to Mass without
her Mother, this Communication was but
rarely to be obtain'd.

Don Hermiolo all this while prosecuted
his Suit with Vigour, and being favour'd
by the Father, and in all appearance well
receiv'd by the Daughter, was in expecta-
tion of having his utmost Wishes in a short
time compleated. His becoming the Hus-
band of *Angelina* was a thing by all that
knew them look'd on as already agreed
upon; and nothing was more talk'd of in
publick, than the magnificent Preparations
which wou'd be made for this Wedding.
Don Alphonso heard the Discourses on this
Head, and was almost at his Wits end;
especially since he cou'd no way get to the
Speech

Speech of *Angelina*, nor had received no Letter from her in some days : — Rack'd with Suspence,—made senseless with his Fears,—and fir'd with wild Impatience, he no longer cou'd contain himself within the Bounds of Prudence, or of Moderation. He went to the Street where *Don Pedro* lived, kept walking continually before his House, in hope he might some time or other see his beloved Charmer at the Windows, and was not without Thoughts of putting an end to his Jealousies of *Don Hermiolo*, by depriving him of Life, or losing his own in the Attempt, in case they had chanc'd to meet. His first Wish succeeded ; he beheld the beautiful *Angelina*, standing in a Balcony, was seen by her, and had the Happiness of a Bow from her, accompanied with a Look, which in it bore her Soul, all Softness, and endearing Love : but the Fears of being observ'd, making her retire much sooner than he, or herself desir'd, he had not the power to follow the Example she had set, but stood gazing toward the Place she left, like one stupid, or transfix'd with Thunder.

Don Pedro had at this time a Nephew in the House with him, call'd *Don Antonio de Villbac* : he was young, fiery, and proud ; he had been told of the Love *Angelina* had borne:

borne Don *Alphonso*, and despis'd him on the account of his narrow Fortune; he happen'd to be at an adjacent Window when his Cousin was at the Balcony, and was witness of all that pass'd; nor was so little skill'd in Intrigue, as not to know there was still remaining the most tender Inclination between them: and disdaining, that she cou'd think on a Man he esteem'd so much beneath them; and looking on it as the highest Presumption in *Alphonso*, to approach so near the House of Don *Pedro*, and address his Daughter, tho' in that humble manner, that he cou'd not contain himself; but going to him, as he still continu'd in that fix'd and thoughtful posture, gave him a pluck by the Sleeve, and bid him indulge his Contemplations, if he had any, in another place; that he was in, being not fit for him. Whatever place I please to chuse, is so, *reply'd Alphonso fiercely*; nor am I to be instructed by such as you. Nor am I a Companion for things like you, *resum'd the other*; but you had best quit the sight of these forbidden Walls, or I shall send those who shall chastise your Insolence; I think myself above it. In speaking these words, he went back into the House, clapping the Door after him. *Alphonso* was tempted by

by the first Suggestions of his Rage to have pursued him into the House, and taken that Revenge on him the Affront requir'd; but the Respect he had for *Angelina*, prevented, and made him delay it to a fitter Season and Place, than that in which she might be a Witness of it. But the *Spanish* Pride not supporting long an Injury of the kind he had receiv'd, early the next Morning he sent him by his Servant a Billet, containing these Lines:

To Don Antonio de Villhac.

‘ **I**F it had not been my regard to o-
‘ thers, more deserving it than your-
‘ self, you had not yesterday escap’d that
‘ Punishment your Rudeness merited;—
‘ you must not however imagine I have
‘ forgot such Treatment; and to shew
‘ you how dangerous such a Behaviour
‘ is, will meet you behind the Convent
‘ of St. *Iägo*, in an hour after the receipt
‘ of this.

Yours,

Alphonso de Piralto.

Do

Don *Antonio*, whose Valour consisted chiefly in Bravado, thought himself, being more wealthy than *Alphonso*, not oblig'd to answer him in the way he desir'd ; and therefore took Pen and Paper, and writ to him in this manner :

To Don Alphonso de Piralto.

‘ IF Pride had left thee any room for
 ‘ Reason, thou woud’st know a Man of
 ‘ my Quality has something else to employ
 ‘ his time, than to fight with one of thine.
 ‘ — For thy part, being disappointed of
 ‘ thy hopes of *Angelina* and her Fortune,
 ‘ thou hast little else to do but die ; but I
 ‘ am not of a humour to become thy Execu-
 ‘ tioner : there are Cords or Knivesto do
 ‘ the business, and to make it more roman-
 ‘ tick, thou may’st perform the Deed un-
 ‘ der that Window, where I found thee
 ‘ yesterday, lurking like a Thief. Farewell,
 ‘ trouble me no more, but cure or end thy
 ‘ Miseries as thou can’st, either way ’tis
 ‘ indifferent to

Antonio de Villbac.

What

What an Effect such an Answer as this must have on the Receiver, any disinterested Person may judge: All the Blood of *Alphonso* boil'd in his Veins with high Disdain; — he deliberated not a Moment, but return'd his Contempts in these Terms:

To Don Antonio de Villhac.

‘ **U**Nworthy as thou art, either of my
‘ Pen or Sword, I send this once
‘ more to call thee to the Field, where, if
‘ thou darest not come, thy Shame shall
‘ be proclaim’d on every Convent, Church,
‘ and Monastery Gate. — As for my
‘ disappointment of *Angelina*, I may per-
‘ haps be happier with her than thou
‘ canst hope to be with any Woman; since
‘ sure there can be none so wretchedly
‘ abandon’d, as to have one tender
‘ Thought of thee. — I shall wave thy
‘ other mean Reflections, as beneath my
‘ Anger, and deserving, like him who made
‘ them, only the Scorn of

Alphonso de Pirallo.

Don

Don *Antonio* no sooner receiv'd this Letter, than he show'd it to his Uncle Don *Pedro*, and afterwards to *Angelina* ; maliciously insinuating, that he had writ in that manner in contempt of the Favours she had allow'd him ; which he fleeringly told her were now no Secret. Never was Surprise, Vexation, and Disappointment equal to *Angelina's*, at finding she had indeed been mention'd in such a Billet.— To send a Challenge to a Person so nearly related to her, she thought was Crime enough to merit her utmost Indignation ; but to name her as a Person, whose Kindness he was assur'd of, not to be forgiven. To add to this, that Servant who had liv'd with *Maria* at the time *Alphonso* had met *Angelina* there, happening to be turn'd away on some Disgust, and afterwards hired with an Acquaintance of Don *Antonio's* ; that ill-natur'd Man heard from him the whole History of their frequent Interviews, which he repeated to *Angelina*, as if the knowledge of it had come from *Alphonso* himself. These Reports, illustrated with all the aggravating Circumstances imaginable, made her ready to die with Spite, and Shame, and Grief ; she had the mortification of believing herself ill treated, and deceiv'd by him she had most depended on

on and lov'd ; the tender Reproaches of a much troubled Father, for the Imposition she had put on him ; the folded Arms, the melancholy Air of a jealous and despairing Lover, to upbraid her making him the Property of her Affection for a more happy Rival ; and the Reflection that she had merited all this for the sake of a Man so ungrateful, so vain-glorious, and perfidious, as she now believ'd *Alphonso* ; made her resolve to tear him from her Heart, tho' in the Effort she shou'd break the Strings which held in Life. 'Twas for his Virtues I lov'd him, *said she*, to herself ; and since those Virtues are but Cheats, meer Farces, play'd by Hypocrisy to delude me, I scorn the base, the ignoble Trifler ; —— I will let him and all the World see I do. —— I will marry *Don Hermiolo*, if yet he thinks me worthy of him ; and by my future Conduct, repair the Errors of the past. Had she given herself time for Deliberation, 'tis possible she had not continu'd long in this mind ; but that dejected Lover coming into the Room that moment with her Father, as she was forming this Resolution, she repeated to them part of the words she had been saying to herself ; who, not willing to put any thing to the venture, contracted her

her to him immediately ; and *Don Pedro*, having before given Orders for all necessary Preparations for the Marriage, it was agreed it shou'd be delay'd no longer than the next Day.

The News of such Affairs has Wings ; *Alphonso* was presently inform'd of it, but cou'd get no means of either speaking to *Angelina*, or conveying a Letter to her. *Maria*, since her discarded Servant had reveal'd the Mystery of the Lovers meeting at her House, had no longer any Interest with *Don Pedro* ; he had forbid her to visit his Daughter, and her Friendship was now no longer of any service to him ;—— he pass'd the Night in Agonies, more easily to be guess'd at than describ'd ; yet sweetned ever and anon with the remembrance of the Vow *Angelina* had taken.— He cou'd not believe she wou'd consent to be another's, and imagin'd, that if she came to the Altar at all, she wou'd come weeping, trembling, and half dead with the Violence made use of to compel her. He knew not, alas ! the Treachery had been used to him, and by what means the Love *Angelina* had for him was converted (or at least seem'd so for the present) into its contrary. Early in the Morning he quitted his Bed, render'd uneasy and
restless

restless to him, and made what enquiry he cou'd into the Truth of the intended Marriage, but found all he had been told of it confirm'd by as many Mouths as spoke of it.— Raving, like one in a Frenzy, he ran to the Chappel of *Nostre Dame*, where he heard it was to be solemniz'd ; but the press of People was so thick to see this Beauty dispos'd of, that he cou'd not get to the Altar till the Ceremony was almost over: tho' as soon as he was near enough to see who they were that stood there, he cried out to the Priest to put a stop to what he was about;——that *Angelina* was not at her own liberty to chuse, nor at the disposal of any other Person;——that she was his alone by Love, by Vow, and solemn Contract.——These words several times repeated, made the Throng give back, and also oblig'd the Priest to demand the cause of this Interruption. He raves, cry'd *Angelina*, endeavouring to assume a Courage, tho' she had none, and was that moment ready to sink at the foot of the Altar. The Folly and Malice of a discarded Lover, added *Don Pedro* ; all his Friends rejoin'd the same ; and poor *Alphonso* having none to back him, had his Voice immediately drown'd among the general Cry. Despair now took up all his Soul, he va-
L
lued

lued not his own Life, and was bent on taking that of his Rival; he drew his Sword, and run on *Don Hermiolo* with so much fury, that it was buried to the Hilt in his Body, before any one was quick enough to prevent it: tho' *Don Antonio*, who saw what he was about, had his ready in a moment, too late for the defence of that unhappy Gentleman, but early enough for his Revenge; for before he expir'd, he saw his Murderer fall a bleeding Sacrifice by *Don Antonio*. *Angelina*, who knew herself the cause of so terrible a Spectacle, seem'd turn'd into a Stone, with mute Astonishment and Grief.—A while she stood, but motionless, and of every Sense depriv'd; then sunk breathless on the Body of *Alphonso*, even in Death reclining to that Breast, which held in Life her greatest Treasure.

Don Pedro for some time had not the power of Speech; but when they began to open the Robes of *Angelina*, and found her not in a Swoon, as had been suppos'd, but dead, her Soul departed to return no more; he sent forth a great Cry, with these words; Miserable Man! what have I done! kill'd my only Child through too much Love and Care? Had they been married, added he, (pointing to *Alphonso* and her) she

she had been yet alive, nor had these dreadful Murders stain'd the holy Altar.

Servants belonging to the Chappel, remov'd the Bodies into a Room ; after which, Don *Pedro* was carry'd home, more dead than alive ; and Don *Antonio* before the Officers of Justice, who, tho' he drew his Sword, but in the defence of Don *Hermiolo*, was judg'd criminal, because he kill'd *Alphonso* after the other fell, and was therefore condemn'd to suffer six Months Imprisonment, and at his coming out, pay a large Fine to the Church, he had contributed to prophane.

Thus ended the Loves and Lives of two of the most lovely Persons of their time ; it wou'd be well if all Fathers wou'd take example by Don *Pedro*, and not place the whole Felicity of their Children in Wealth, and all young Ladies avoid that too common Error of making Vows, they are not certain they have the Power to keep ; and which once broke, are sure to bring inevitable Ruin on their Heads.



T H E
Witty Reclaimer ;
 O R,
A Man made Honest.



H O' there is scarce any Man who is really in Love, that wants the Inspiration of that Deity to enable him to speak much better on that Subject than on any other ; yet it is to be doubted, if ever Lover declar'd himself in a more tender or passionate manner, than did Don *Fabritio* to the fair *Christiana* : every thing he said was accompanied with Looks and Gestures,

tures, which render'd his words too forcible to be resisted; not only *Christiana* herself, but as many as saw them together, were assur'd, that never Man was possess'd of a more constant or violent Passion than he was; and tho' she labour'd under some Disadvantages as to point of Fortune, her Beauty, and his Admiration of it, was look'd upon to be a sufficient Dower.

As it was on the most honourable Terms that he address'd her, and that she deny'd not to grant him all the modest Freedoms he cou'd ask; it was generally believ'd that their Marriage wou'd be solemniz'd in a short time: nor was there indeed any Obstacle to impede it; he had none who had any power to controul his Inclinations, and those seem'd fix'd on her, as were hers on him. The equally enamour'd Pair were always together, except in those hours in which Decency compell'd him to withdraw; she entertain'd no Company but such as were approv'd by him, and had entirely discarded all who had made any Pretensions of Love to her. Such a Behaviour on both sides cou'd promise nothing but an ensuing *Hymen*, and 'tis certain he design'd no other: but, alas, an unfortunate Accident happen'd on a sudden,

which gave an entire Turn to the Affair, and gave occasion for many odd Adventures to them both. He was with her one Evening, and alone, when unusual Desires fired all his Blood, and made him wild for her undoing.——Never before had he experienc'd such Heats;——the ungovernable Passion grew beyond all restraint; he cou'd not view her Beauties without gratifying his exterior Faculties, as well as in Idea they had those of his Mind: nor was his Sight the only Sense which crav'd; the impatient Touch must now be fed; he began with kissing and embracing her in a manner, such as he had never done before; and when she reprov'd him for it, instead of submitting with a modest Lover's Patience, and humble Fearfulness of offending, with added Vigour he flew to her Breast, and growing still more bold, between Surprise and Tenderness, she had not the power of repulsing him in the manner which alone cou'd have oblig'd him to desist.——In fine, all the respectful Passion he had bore her, being now perverted into a mad Desire, he fully triumph'd in the Spoils of ruin'd Virtue, and satiated every longing Wish; —Tears, Sighs, and soft Upbraidings, the common Dialect of an undone Virgin, pass'd.

pass'd away the little time he stay'd with her, after the guilty Transport was over: he spar'd no pains indeed to assure her, that what had happen'd was occasion'd only by the excess of his Passion; that he had still the same Thoughts of her as ever, and that in a few days he would convince her, by making her his Wife, that he had never harbour'd any Designs on her, but such as were honourable. The believing, Fair rested satisfied with the Protestations he made, and for a time forgave herself for what she had permitted.

But too soon was the pleasing Dream of his Fidelity and Honour dissolv'd, and she awoke to certain Misery in the knowledge of his Ungratitude and Perfidy: Few were the Visits he made her after that in which she had resign'd her Honour, that carry'd their first Fervour; his Tenderness, his Assiduity, his Fondness by swift degrees abated, and sunk at last into a calm, cold, Indifference.—When she mention'd the performance of his Promise, he evaded it with Excuses, such as she had too much penetration not to see through; and when enrag'd at so cruel a Return for what she had done, she began to vent some part of her Indignation in Reproaches, he went not to her again, till

a kind Billet fill'd with Entreaties to see him, let him know she was in a better humour. Being permitted to see him at all, however, serv'd a little to keep Hope alive within her; she flatter'd herself with the Imagination that her Truth, her Love, her Constancy, might in time convince him there was no other Woman he ought to call his Wife: and tho' she had many, who on hearing Don *Fabritio* was grown cool in his Devoirs, made Proposals of Marriage to her, yet wou'd she listen to none, still waiting for the happy Moment which shou'd restore him to her, the same ardent Lover he was once; but how vain a Chimæra this was, 'tis easy for any one to judge. Instead of finding her Expectations answer'd, she found him grow more cold, more remiss in his Visits, and at last refrain'd them entirely. Numberless were the Letters she sent him, and the Complaints she made on his Unkindness; but as they were nothing more than any Woman wou'd say in the like Circumstance, I shall omit the recital of them, and only inform my Reader that they were of no effect. She heard that he now made his Addresses to a young Lady of a great Fortune, call'd *Villaretta*; that she receiv'd his Suit, and that they were to be married

n a short time. It is not to be doubted, but that at so high a Provocation her Rage burst out into the most violent Expressions; there was nothing of reproachful that she forbore to write, for he had for some time taken care she shou'd have no opportunity of speaking to him; but her Anger, as her Complaints, were all unheeded, and he went on in the Prosecution of this Love-Affair; till he had accomplish'd it, and was become the Husband of *Villarretta*.

Hopes and Fears were now at an end with the disconsolate *Christiana*, and the most terrible Despair took possession of her Soul; the excessive Disorders of her Mind had so great an effect on her Body, that she fell into a violent Fever, from which she was not without great difficulty recover'd. The Love which Don *Fabritio* had formerly profess'd for her, was so well known, that no body imagin'd her Distemper had any other Source than Grief for his Inconstancy; and as she was a Woman generally esteem'd and lov'd on the account of her Beauty and good Qualities, that Gentleman was extreamly condemn'd by all that knew him for his Behaviour to her. Whether it were the Remonstrances which were daily made him by those

Friends to whom he had imparted his Passion for her, or whether to the secret Checks of his own Conscience alone it was owing, is uncertain; but this I know, that Remorse for what he had done, made him go to see her, when she least expected him; and preventing the Reproaches she was about to make him, I come, much injur'd *Christiana*, said he; (throwing himself at her Feet) not to ask your pardon for a Crime which was without Excuse in its Acting; and can now no way be repair'd by my Submission; but to entreat you will discharge the whole Weight of your Indignation on my devoted guilty Head.— Let loose your Wrath in the most keen Upbraidings;—but Words, alas! are poor for Wrongs like yours.—Revenge yourself with this, *continu'd he*, (presenting her with the Hilt of his Sword) let this drain all the Blood of my perfidious Heart, but spare your own from Grief;—restore your own dear Peace, and strike this injurious Disturber of it dead. He added many more Expressions of the same nature, and accompanied them with so moving a Tone and Gesture, that poor *Christiana*, tho' at his first entrance in the Room, alarm'd with the most violent Fury, in a moment relinquish'd it all, and had not the

the power to utter a syllable of Severity. She was too much struck with his Repentance and Despair, to be able to inflict more on him, and believing him again her Lover, tho' incapable of avowing himself so, cou'd consider him no longer as her Undoer.—Rise, *said she*, ever too dear for the Repose of *Christiana*; to have restor'd my Peace, you shou'd have been still unkind and cruel; this late Return to Tendernefs kills all my Resolves, and lures me back to all my former Softnefs; again I love you; and again am wretched. Oh loveliest, sweetest, best of all that ever was call'd Woman, *resum'd he*, how shall I acknowledge as I ought such matchless Goodnefs! The Power of proving what I wou'd do, is lost, and words are poor to thank thee.—Wou'd you then, *said she*, were you again free from the Marriage-chain, consent to wear it for *Christiana's* sake? By Heaven I wou'd (*reply'd he, with a Vehemence which spoke Sincerity*) and tho' Interest, and I know not what vile Motives drew me to the Bed of *Villaretta*, never have I there enjoy'd one Moment of true Felicity.—The Idea of *Christiana's* Wrongs damp'd all my Pleasures, rack'd me with Remorse, and turn'd my imaginary Heaven into a real Hell. Then *Vil-*
laretta,

laretta, when possess'd, resum'd *she*, appears no more worthy of Affection than *Christiana*? Oh forbear the unequal Compare, cry'd *he*; by all that we adore, not the Raptures of the first Enjoyment there, were half so dear, as is one Look, one distant Glance of thine. Cou'd you then love me still? said *she*. With the same Fervency as ever, answer'd *he*; with Desire unbated, for ever languish for thy Beauties, for ever long to feed upon thy Sweets, devour each Charm with greedy Passion, yet find something still to wish for. Swear then, resum'd *she*, and I'll believe you, that if Death, or any other Accident shou'd set you free from *Villaretta*, you wou'd be *Christiana's* in the way you first propos'd, and I receiv'd your Suit. May something worse, cry'd *he*, than any yet invented Plague fall on me if I wou'd not, and take thee to my Arms with far more Transport than that which forc'd me to thy Ruin, and the gratification of an unruly Appetite. Let us then wait with patience, resum'd *she*, who knows what Heaven has in store to crown my Constancy and thy Repentance. They had some farther Discourse on this Head; after which, *Fabritio*, fir'd with the same Desires as before his Marriage, wou'd fain have obtain'd.

tain'd the same Effect, but *Christiana* wou'd by no means be prevail'd on to grant it ; but having repuls'd his Efforts with a Warmth which let him see she was determin'd, she told him, that since he lov'd her again, as a Punishment for his not having always done so, and a Proof that he now did, he must resolve to see her no more, unless at liberty to make her his by such means as were consistent with the Laws of Virtue and the Land. It is not to be doubted, but that he express'd on this Occasion all that Despair cou'd suggest ; try'd every Argument that Love and Wit cou'd raise, to inspire her with Sentiments more to the advantage of his Desires : but she remain'd immoveable, and he was oblig'd to take leave of her, as he then believ'd, for the last time ; she telling him she wou'd retire into the Country, and there secluding herself from all Society, attend the Issue of her Fate. Nothing cou'd be more mournful than their parting on his side ; but she seem'd to support it with a Fortitude, not to be expected from a Woman who had so far yielded to the Power of Love.

He was not however without some secret Hope that she wou'd not be able to put this Resolve in execution, till coming

to visit her in three or four days after, designing to renew his Arguments for detaining her in a place where he might at least be permitted to see her, if no more ; he found she had already been as good as her Word, that she was remov'd, none cou'd inform him where. At first the usual Emotions of a disappointed Lover seiz'd his Soul ; he was impatient, raved, enquir'd for her of every one whom he thought might probably be let into the Secret of her Departure ; but all being ineffectual, Time which wears off all things, abated his Disorders ; tho' indeed he had other Reasons to make him not altogether so much taken up with the Thoughts of *Christiana* as he had been : *Villaretta*, from the most obliging Wife in the World, was grown the most careless and indifferent to him ; she behav'd to him in a manner which astonish'd all that knew them. She alledg'd, that the Change of her Humour proceeded from the alteration of his : She said he had of late been peevish, morose, and sullen, had neglected every thing which might convince her he had an Affection for her, and she therefore was resolv'd to throw off all for him. In fine, nothing cou'd be worse company than they were for each other, a mutual Contempt seem'd to inspire them both, and it was

was in vain that the Friends on each side endeavour'd to bring them to a better way of living together. Continual Jars, Discontents, Reproaches shew'd Marriage in its worst State, and was enough to deter the youthful part of their Acquaintance from entering into it. Instead of the Character of the most complaisant to Ladies, and best-humour'd Man in the World, as *Don Fabritio* was once esteem'd, he had now that of the most Perverse and Disobliging. *Villaretta*, who when a Virgin, and for the first Months of her Marriage, had been justly accounted to be of the most soft, gentle, and mild Disposition in the World, now seem'd all haughty, contradictory, and sullen. Both appear'd the very reverse of what they had been; various Conjectures were made on such a Change, and some there were who imagin'd *Christiana* was but absconded from the rest of the World, that she might have the better Opportunity of entertaining *Fabritio*; and that the continuance of his Affection for that Lady, had made him treat the other in a manner, such as had caus'd this Alteration in her Temper: but this was the Judgment of but a few, most People had too good an Opinion of that Lady's Virtue, to harbour such a Thought; and those, even
who

232 *The Witty Reclaimer; Or,*
who acknowledg'd that the supremeſt
Virtue may poſſibly be vanquiſh'd by Love,
when they conſider'd her Spirit and good
Senſe, believ'd ſhe wou'd rather ſuffer the
force of an unextinguiſhable Paſſion to prey
upon her Life, than yield to it for the ſake
of a Man, who after addreſſing her only on
honourable Terms, ſhou'd preſume to ap-
proach her on any other, after having
diſpos'd of himſelf to another Woman.
As for *Villaretta*, tho' before Marriage
ſhe never expreſs'd any violent Paſſion for
Fabritio; ſhe no ſooner was become his
Wife, than ſhe gave all imaginable demon-
ſtrations of her Tenderneſs: nor cou'd a-
ny one ſuppoſe ſhe had ſince entertain'd
an Affection for any other, becauſe her
own natural Reſerve join'd to the ſtrict-
neſs in which *Spaniſh* Wives are kept, had
prevented her from converſing with any
with whom ſhe cou'd be ſuſpected to have
been charm'd. But how widely different
from the Truth were all the Gueſſes made
on this Affair, I ſhall now inform my Rea-
der.

Villaretta, as I have before obſerv'd,
having never entertain'd any vaſt Paſſion,
either for her Husband, or before her
Marriage with him, was the more capa-
ble of receiving a ſoft Impreſſion, when-
ever

ever she shou'd see an Object capable of inspiring it ; and being by the early Coldness of Don *Fabritio* convinc'd, *Tenderness* had the least share in his making choice of her for a Wife, the *Indifference* she before had for him, grew now into a kind of an *Aversion* ; especially after she had Reasons to believe herself belov'd by a Person she thought infinitely more agreeable. In fine, it was the most violent *Passion* which she had for another, which made her so little able to endure the least Mistake in the Behaviour of her Husband, and to break out into such violent Eruptions with him, as made both their Lives a perfect Hell. She had not been married above a Month, when she receiv'd a Letter, put into her Hand by a Person unknown to her, as she came one Evening from Vespers, the Contents whereof, were as follows :

To the greatly Injur'd, but most Lovely and Adorable Villaretta.

‘ **T**H O’ nothing is so certain a Proof
‘ of a great and violent *Passion* as
‘ the *Impossibility* of declaring it ; yet never is it accompanied with that *Awe*,
‘ without being fatal to its own *Hopes*.—
‘ Long

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‘ Long have I ador’d you, oh most ami-
 ‘ able *Villaretta* ! but never cou’d gain
 ‘ Courage to tell you so, ——— a thou-
 ‘ sand times my Tongue has been pre-
 ‘ par’d to declare to Don *Belino* what I
 ‘ felt, and entreat his Permission to throw
 ‘ myself at the Feet of his charming Daugh-
 ‘ ter ; but the fear of offending you, still
 ‘ deterr’d me. ——— Curs’d Timidity ! un-
 ‘ happy, and too slavish Apprehension,
 ‘ how hast thou undone me ! ——— Sudden-
 ‘ Affairs compelling me to leave *Madrid*,
 ‘ I gain’d in Absence that Resolution,
 ‘ which in your Presence I never cou’d ob-
 ‘ tain, and determin’d, when I shou’d re-
 ‘ turn, to lay open all my Soul, and die at
 ‘ once by your Disdain, rather than sup-
 ‘ port the tedious Tortures of a ling’ring
 ‘ Death. ——— But, oh ! scarce had I en-
 ‘ ter’d the Place, where all my Hopes
 ‘ were treasur’d, than I heard the Ob-
 ‘ ject of them was dispos’d of ! — Great
 ‘ God ! dispos’d of to a Man who knew
 ‘ not the thousandth part of the Worth of
 ‘ the Jewel he possess’d, — to a Man
 ‘ who had already given his Heart and
 ‘ Vows — to a Man so stupidly insensi-
 ‘ ble, that not all the Charms *Villa-*
 ‘ *retta* is Mistress of ; not all the Obli-
 ‘ gations which the name of Husband lays
 ‘ him

him under, has power to make him forget the inferior Beauties of *Christiana*.—
Prophane as he is, how dare he, being yours, bestow a Thought on any other Woman, much less a Maid so mean, so trifling as she?——Oh, how are you wrong'd, Divinest of your Sex!——How dull, how stupid is *Fabritio*! and how lost am I to every Hope, to every Wish!——By Heaven were you happy, I cou'd not be wholly wretched; but to be depriv'd of all possibility of possessing you myself, and know you to be possess'd by one so unworthy of you, is a Hell I cannot bear.——But to what purpose do I tell you this? What will now the declaring my wretched State avail me?——
——Shou'd you be so divinely Good to pity me, nay, to lament my Misery, wou'd it afford me Ease?——Oh, no!
——Death only can relieve me, and that must shortly be my portion.——All I entreat, is, that you will read the humble Complains of my bleeding Heart; long, alas! you will not be persecuted with them.——Pardon, and compassionate

Your unknown Adorer.

Tho

Tho' it was impossible that a Letter, such as this from a Person whose Form she was utterly unacquainted with, cou'd make any impression on *Villaretta* ; yet 'tis certain it help'd to soften her, and strengthen her Aversion to her Husband : besides, it fell in with her Foible ; she was before suspicious that *Don Fabritio* had still a Tenderness for *Christiana* ; she had heard that he had visited her since his Marriage, and doubted not but that there was so good an understanding between them, that she had left *Madrid* merely for the pleasure of entertaining him in a more private manner. Disdain now swell'd up her Breast, all the Woman's Pride rous'd itself in her impatient Soul, and she resolv'd upon Revenge.——She long'd to know who this passionate Incognito was, and blamed his Over-Caution, and unnecessary Fears of declaring his Name. A few days after the receipt of this Letter, she saw at Chapel the most lovely Youth she had ever beheld ; he seem'd to gaze upon her with a more than common Earnestness, all the Symptoms of Love were plain in his Eyes, and as she was veil'd, according to the *Spanish* Custom, she cou'd not help believing he had seen more of her at some other time than the Crape permitted at this.

this. Heavens ! *cry'd she to herself*, if this shou'd be the Person who loves me !—— How perfectly compleat he is ! —— how many thousand Charms attend his every Look and Motion !—— But then again, it cannot be, *said she* ; a Form so beautiful cou'd never fear Success ;—— he wou'd not have conceal'd his Passion, he must have known it wou'd immediately have been accepted, — and that whenever he appear'd, *Fabritio* wou'd not have been permitted to approach a Woman who had Eyes or Soul. A thousand times did she repeat these, or the like words, backwards and forwards, according as her Sentiments chang'd : but the same Evening put her out of her Suspence ; as she was sitting alone in a low Window, a Paper was thrown in, which taking hastily up, she found contain'd these Words :

To the Divine Villaretta.

‘ **W**HEN I conjur'd you to read
‘ my Epistles, I assur'd you that
‘ the wretched Sender of them cou'd not
‘ long survive, to trouble you with them.—
‘ I hoped indeed my Love and my De-
‘ spair wou'd take me from the World,
‘ with-

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‘ without the Aid of any other Means ;
 ‘ but, oh ! I cannot wait the slow Result
 ‘ of these distracting Passions, which, tho’
 ‘ they kill a thousand times a day, still
 ‘ leave me Sense to feel Increase of Tor-
 ‘ ture.— It cannot therefore be a crime
 ‘ to give myself that Ease which Fate de-
 ‘ nies by any other way.——I have now
 ‘ determin’d on it, and this Night shall
 ‘ put an end to all the Miseries I so long
 ‘ have felt;——but because I cannot die
 ‘ without your Pardon, be so excellently
 ‘ good to afford it me ;——’tis for the
 ‘ sake of my eternal Peace I beg it.——
 ‘ ’Twou’d be a Torment greater than any
 ‘ I can hereafter suffer, to think I die un-
 ‘ forgiven by you ;——say but you pity
 ‘ me, and I shall die contented : in the
 ‘ Chapel where I so often have been
 ‘ bless’d with your dear sight, will I at-
 ‘ tend your Answer ;——after which,
 ‘ I shall take effectual Means to ease
 ‘ you of any further Persecutions, from

Your Despairing Slave.

— *William*

Villaretta had not patience to examine the Contents, before she look'd out of the Window, to see, if possible, from what Hand it came ; but with what strange disorder, with what a pain-mix'd Pleasure did her Bosom swell, when she perceiv'd that lovely Youth, whose Form she had so much admir'd, standing opposite to the House, with folded Arms, and all the Tokens of Despair about him? ———

He made a low Bow, as soon as he perceiv'd she saw him, and then retir'd.

She read the Letter again, and again, and the sight of the charming Author render'd it as moving as he cou'd have wish'd. She deliberated not a moment, if she cou'd grant his Request ; and taking Pen and Paper, made use of the Opportunity she now had, of *Don Fabritio's* being abroad, to write to him in this manner ;

To the Agreeable, Unknown.

IF you are unfortunate, it has been wholly owing to yourself ; I never saw enough in *Don Fabritio*, to prefer him before any other Man, much less one, who I dare say has no other Fault than a too little Sense of his own Merit ;—and after

' ter having declar'd the Indifference I had
 ' for him, 'tis needless to tell you, who I
 ' perceive are well acquainted with the
 ' Wrong he does me, that I now hate
 ' him .——The Censure of the ill-judging
 ' World, however, makes me conceal, as
 ' much as possible, my Aversion for him;
 ' and tho' his Behaviour to me might well
 ' absolve my Breach of Duty to him, yet
 ' wou'd not his Errors pass as an Excuse
 ' for mine, shou'd it be known I encour-
 ' rag'd an Address like yours.——Be dis-
 ' creet therefore, and conceal the Pity I
 ' afford you, and see that you deserve it,
 ' by giving over all Thoughts of Dying;
 ' and also when you appear before me,
 ' let me not see you with any Marks
 ' of Grief about you;——be assur'd of
 ' my Friendship, and that I will spare
 ' no Proofs of it which are consistent
 ' with Honour.——Let me know to whom
 ' I am oblig'd for so tender an Affection,
 ' which I wou'd have you vanquish no
 ' more than just enough to make you re-
 ' concil'd to Life. I leave it to you to
 ' contrive Means for our Correspondence
 ' this way, which I will never break off
 ' while you continue to desire it of

Villaretta.

The

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‘ feast Imagination with Reflection on the
 ‘ prodigious Bliss ;———but, oh com-
 ‘ pleat, confirm it by permitting me to
 ‘ throw myself beneath your Feet, and
 ‘ telling you there what ’tis I feel, how
 ‘ much I am transported; suffer me to
 ‘ speak to you, tho’ but for a Moment:
 ‘ I have a Friend, at whose House you
 ‘ may securely grant me an Interview.—
 ‘ Pardon the Presumption of this Request,
 ‘ and know yourself so much the Mistress
 ‘ of my Soul, as to be assur’d, that how-
 ‘ ever impatient my Wishes are, I shall
 ‘ take no other Advantages, than such as
 ‘ in pity to my Sufferings you are pleas’d
 ‘ to allow to the now

All-Raptur’d,

Diego Del Piramont.

P. S. ‘ You were so good to tell
 ‘ me, you wou’d not be displeas’d to know
 ‘ the Name of him who hitherto durst
 ‘ not presume to declare it, having re-
 ‘ veal’d the other much more dangerous
 ‘ Secret

‘ Secret of his Passion; but, if after ha-
‘ ving subscrib’d myself in the manner I
‘ have done, you want a farther Confir-
‘ mation, I am a Nephew of the Duke of
‘ *Alva*’s, and but for my own Timidity,
‘ might, perhaps, through his Interest,
‘ have obtain’d what is so unworthily
‘ bestow’d on *Fabritio*: I shall impatient-
‘ ly expect my Charmer’s Reply at that
‘ Chapel, where I go more to pay my De-
‘ votion to her, than the less worship’d
‘ Saint to whom ’tis consecrated.

Villaretta, by this time quite lost in
Love for this new Charmer, and an en-
tire Contemner of her Husband, whol-
ly sway’d by Inclination, wrote him an
Answer, in these Terms:

To the Worthy Don Diego Del Piramont.

‘ **W**Holly depending on your Honour,
‘ I will not refuse the Request
‘ you make :——I know no reason why
‘ I shou’d deprive myself of the Pleasure
‘ your Conversation may afford me, for
‘ the sake of a Punctilio which *Fabritio* de-

' serves not from me.—I will come to
 ' Chapel, attended but by one Servant, who
 ' I will find some Pretence to dismiss as
 ' soon as I come there :—lead the Way
 ' therefore to the Place where you wou'd
 ' entertain me, and I will follow ; but
 ' take no notice of me till out of all Obser-
 ' vers Eyes.——Remember that I
 ' have your Promise of taking no ad-
 ' vantage of the Opportunity given
 ' you by

Villaretta.

'Tis not to be suppos'd, but that the
 Lover provided every thing in order for
 the Reception of this obliging Lady. A
 noble Collation was prepar'd, the best
 Musick attended in the next Room ; in
 fine, nothing was wanting to let her see
 he study'd to entertain her in the politest
 manner : She was perfectly pleas'd with
 his Behaviour ; but he, not forgetting the
 Business of Passion, press'd by degrees for
 greater Favours ; which she refusing, tho'
 but faintly, out of an excessive Regard to
 her Commands he desisted ; only exacted
 from

from her a Promise of meeting him again at the same Place the next Night; to which she willingly consenting, they parted for that time.

Don *Fabritio*, who not loving *Villaretta*, took little Observation of her Conduct, knew nothing of what pass'd, till he receiv'd a Letter from a Hand to which he was altogether a stranger, containing these Lines :

To Don Fabritio.

‘ **Y**OUR Family, your own Worth,
‘ and my real Friendship for your
‘ Person, tho’ unknown to you, makes
‘ me unable to know your Dishonour,
‘ and not put it in your power, or to redress,
‘ or to revenge your Wrongs;
‘ ——— your Wife this Evening meets a
‘ young *Chevalier* at the House of *Madam De Elvida*. ——— This is not the
‘ first Opportunity he has had with her;
‘ —judge of the use a Lover makes of such
‘ Opportunities as she allows him: —If you
‘ come accompanied by Officers of Justice,
‘ you may find them in a manner which may
‘ M 3 give

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give you full freedom to act as you
please, — and I doubt not but you will
do as becomes you :

Yours, &c.

As little Regard as *Don Fabritio* had for the Person of *Villaretta*, he had enough for his own Honour to be prodigiously alarm'd at this Adventure ; he knew not presently, however, if he should give Credit to the Intelligence or not : at first he consider'd, that perhaps the little Agreement between him and his Wife might have occasion'd some Person, an Enemy to both, to send this on purpose to raise an Aspersion ; but had the Consideration, that if it shou'd happen to be true, he wou'd have the opportunity of being parted from her, which made him resolve to come at the Certainty. He therefore acquainted three or four Gentlemen of his Kindred with the Affair, and going all together disguis'd and muffled in their Clothes, stood at the corner of the Street till they had seen *Villaretta* enter the House of *Madam De Elvida*, and soon after her, one of the most beautiful *Chevaliers* they had ever beheld. They attempted not to follow them,

them, but keeping their Post, till the Lovers wou'd think themselves secure, when they saw an Opportunity of the Door being open, they rush'd in, and some running to one Room, and some to another, that which it was *Don Fabritio's* Chance to enter, was that in which his Wife was entertain'd by her young Enamorato; he had been, it seems, too pressing to be refus'd, and she had suffer'd him to bear her to a Bed, where they lay in the most amorous Posture imaginable: and tho' there was nothing to be seen that cou'd testify *Don Fabritio* had been wrong'd in Fact; yet there was enough to prove his Wife intended no other.—Her Arms were close lock'd about the Charmer's Neck, while his encircled her Waist:— Their Lips seem'd to be cemented, as were their panting Breasts; but the most surprising Circumstance of all, was, that the Lover still kept his Post, nor stirr'd till the Husband, incens'd beyond measure at such unparallel'd Impudence, drew his Stiletto, and had made an end of both at once, had not the other Gentlemen that moment run into the Room, and prevented him. Thus detected, all Denials were in vain, and *Villaretta* thought it a sufficient Excuse to alledge in her own Vindica-

dication, that her Husband had been the first Aggressor.—Don *Diego* said but little ; but what he did, was far from disowning the Favours he had receiv'd from *Villaretta*. 'Tis hard to say, whether the Amazement or Rage of Don *Fabritio* was most predominant in his Soul for some time, but the latter at last prevailing, he a second time attempted to sacrifice the injurious Don *Diego* ; but being again prevented, he was oblig'd to content himself with venting his Fury in Revilings.—*Villaretta* stay'd not to hear them, but telling him that she doubted not but to find Friends who shou'd oblige him to return her Dower, since she found he was unwilling to permit, she shou'd retain the Title of his Wife ; went out of the House, and retir'd to a Relation, who liv'd some Miles distant from *Madrid*. As soon as she was out of the Room, Don *Diego* came up to *Fabritio*, and with a Smile, You may now, if you please, said he, be discharg'd from all Obligations to *Villaretta* ; and when you are so, remember your Vows to *Christiana*.

These Words making him look more earnestly at the Person who spoke them, he knew it was no other than she herself,

self, and wonder'd he cou'd so long have been deceiv'd by her Disguise; he took no notice however before his Friends, but making some Pretence to go out of the Room, made a Sign that she shou'd follow him. She did so, and after embracing her, *Has then, said he,* thy ingenious Love contriv'd this Stratagem to make me Just?———Oh how ungrateful have I been! how soft, how tender, how faithful has this Action prov'd thee?———Will you then be constant? *cry'd she*; will you now perform your Promise? By Heaven I will, *reply'd he*, and while I live, adore thee next to Heaven. They had time for no more; the Company suspecting they were gone aside to finish their Quarrel with the Sword's-Point, came running in, and interrupted them.

But why shou'd I detain the Attention of my Reader with the Repetition of what is not material to the Purpose; it will suffice to say, That the Affair being laid before the Judges of criminal Causes, a Divorce was granted to Don *Fabritio*.

After

After which, according to Promise, he married *Christiana*; and willing to prove the Love and Wit of that Lady, he related the whole Story of this Adventure to almost as many as knew them; and never was a more happy Pair since the first in *Eden* before their Fall.



FINIS.



